

NOON BIBLE STUDY: MATTHEW 10 (PART 2)

JESUS SENDS HIS APOSTLES OUT TO PREACH AND HEAL. HE'S JUST GIVEN THEM A SOBERING DESCRIPTION OF WHAT THIS MISSION WILL BE LIKE, NOT ONLY THIS FIRST TIME, BUT IN GENERAL, AS IT WILL NOT BE THEIR LAST MISSIONARY EFFORT. HE BALANCES THE TRUTH THAT THIS WORK WILL BE HARD WITH THE ENCOURAGEMENT THAT THEY ARE LOVED & VALUED BY GOD & THAT THEY WILL NOT BE DOING THIS WORK ALONE OR ACCORDING TO THEIR OWN STRENGTH.

MATTHEW 10:34-36 - SWORD NOT PEACE

THE MESSIAH HELD THE TITLE "PRINCE OF PEACE" (ISAIAH 9:6) AND YET JESUS TELLS HIS DISCIPLES THAT HE ISN'T COMING TO BRING PEACE, BUT "SWORD" - THE SYMBOL OF DIVISION AND WARFARE. AT FIRST READ THIS MIGHT BE CONFUSING - *DOESN'T FOLLOWING JESUS BRING PEACE INTO YOUR LIFE? WON'T JESUS BRING PEACE TO THE EARTH WHEN HE RULES AS KING? DOESN'T JESUS SAY THAT THE PEACEMAKERS WILL BE "BLESSED?" (MATTHEW 5:9)?*

THE ANSWER IS OF COURSE "YES" TO ALL OF THOSE QUESTIONS. BUT JESUS IS TEACHING SOMETHING VERY IMPORTANT TO HIS DISCIPLES AT THIS MOMENT. REMEMBER THE CONTEXT IS THEIR MISSIONARY WORK TO BRING THE GOSPEL TO THE CITIES OF ISRAEL. WE HAVE ALREADY SEEN THAT WHILE THERE IS JUBILATION SURROUNDING JESUS' MINISTRY, THERE IS ALSO A GROWING RESISTANCE FROM THE STAUNCH RELIGIOUS LEADERS AND AUTHORITIES.

9:11 - WHEN THE PHARISEES SAW THIS, THEY SAID TO HIS DISCIPLES, "WHY IS YOUR TEACHER EATING WITH THE TAX COLLECTORS AND SINNERS?"

9:34 - BUT THE PHARISEES WERE SAYING, "HE CASTS OUT THE DEMONS BY THE RULER OF THE DEMONS."

THE DISCIPLES OF JESUS NEED TO ACCEPT THAT NOT EVERYONE WILL ACCEPT THEM OR THEIR MESSAGE. THEIR CALL TO "REPENT" AND FOLLOW JESUS IS NOT GOOD NEWS TO EVERYONE. IT WASN'T THEN, NOR IS IT NOW. VERSES 35-36 IS A QUOTE FROM **MICAH 7:1-7 (8-10)**

MICAH 7:1-7 (NLT) - HOW MISERABLE I AM! I FEEL LIKE THE FRUIT PICKER AFTER THE HARVEST WHO CAN FIND NOTHING TO EAT. NOT A CLUSTER OF GRAPES OR A SINGLE EARLY FIG CAN BE FOUND TO SATISFY MY HUNGER. 2 THE GODLY PEOPLE HAVE ALL DISAPPEARED; NOT ONE HONEST PERSON IS LEFT ON THE EARTH. THEY ARE ALL MURDERERS, SETTING TRAPS EVEN FOR THEIR OWN BROTHERS. 3 BOTH THEIR HANDS ARE EQUALLY SKILLED AT DOING EVIL! OFFICIALS AND JUDGES ALIKE DEMAND BRIBES. THE PEOPLE WITH INFLUENCE GET WHAT THEY WANT, AND TOGETHER THEY SCHEME TO TWIST JUSTICE. 4 EVEN THE BEST OF THEM IS LIKE A BRIER; THE MOST HONEST IS AS DANGEROUS AS A HEDGE OF THORNS. BUT YOUR JUDGMENT DAY IS COMING SWIFTLY NOW. YOUR TIME OF PUNISHMENT IS HERE, A TIME OF CONFUSION.

5 DON'T TRUST ANYONE-- NOT YOUR BEST FRIEND OR EVEN YOUR WIFE! 6 FOR THE SON DESPISES HIS FATHER. THE DAUGHTER DEFIES HER MOTHER. THE DAUGHTER-IN-LAW DEFIES HER MOTHER-IN-LAW. YOUR ENEMIES ARE RIGHT IN YOUR OWN HOUSEHOLD!

7 AS FOR ME, I LOOK TO THE LORD FOR HELP. I WAIT CONFIDENTLY FOR GOD TO SAVE ME, AND MY GOD WILL CERTAINLY HEAR ME.

THE PROPHET MICAH IS SURROUNDED BY EVIL AND THOSE WHO REJECT THE LORD AND MICAH AND YET HE IS RESOLUTE TO TRUST IN THE LORD AND HIS PROMISES. PEOPLE REJECTING GOD'S MESSAGE WILL SET THEMSELVES AGAINST THE PEOPLE WHO ACCEPT GOD'S MESSAGE - EVEN THOSE IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS. BUT MICAH THEN DECLARES THAT EVEN THOUGH THINGS WILL BE HARD FOR A SEASON, GOD WILL BRING ABOUT JUSTICE AND HIS TRUTH WILL BE ILLUMINATED FOR ALL TO SEE IN THE END.

MICAH 7:8-10 (NLT) - DO NOT GLOAT OVER ME, MY ENEMIES! FOR THOUGH I FALL, I WILL RISE AGAIN. THOUGH I SIT IN DARKNESS, THE LORD WILL BE MY LIGHT. 9 I WILL BE PATIENT AS THE LORD PUNISHES ME, FOR I HAVE SINNED AGAINST HIM. BUT AFTER THAT, HE WILL TAKE UP MY CASE AND GIVE ME JUSTICE FOR ALL I HAVE SUFFERED FROM MY ENEMIES. THE LORD WILL BRING ME INTO THE LIGHT, AND I WILL SEE HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS. 10 THEN MY

ENEMIES WILL SEE THAT THE LORD IS ON MY SIDE. THEY WILL BE ASHAMED THAT THEY TAUNTED ME, SAYING, "SO WHERE IS THE LORD-- THAT GOD OF YOURS?" WITH MY OWN EYES I WILL SEE THEIR DOWNFALL; THEY WILL BE TRAMPLED LIKE MUD IN THE STREETS.

IN MICAH'S DAY THE DIVISION OCCURRED BECAUSE OF EVIL AND LACK OF TRUST. THE EVIL IN THE LAND HAD BECOME SO PERVERSIVE THAT IT BEGAN TO DIVIDE EVEN FAMILIES. JESUS USES THIS MOMENT TO ILLUSTRATE THAT HIS GOSPEL IS GOING TO BE A DIVIDING POINT, EVEN FOR FAMILIES.

SO WHAT SHOULD THE DISCIPLES DO IF THEY ARE REJECTED AND HATED, EVEN BY THE PEOPLE CLOSEST TO THEM? THAT'S NOT AN EASY THING TO EXPERIENCE. JESUS CALLS HIS FOLLOWERS TO HAVE PROPERLY ORDERED LOVES SO THAT THEY CAN ENDURE THESE POTENTIALLY HEARTBREAKING TIMES.

MATTHEW 10:37-39 - CORRECTLY ORDERED LOVES

"DO YOU LOVE CHRIST MORE?" - OF COURSE JESUS DOESN'T WANT PEOPLE TO HATE OR DO EVIL TO THEIR FAMILIES (OR ANYONE!) - BUT JESUS IS CHALLENGING HIS FOLLOWERS TO LOVE HIM FIRST AND MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN THEIR LIVES - EVEN THE THINGS THAT THEY WOULD TRADITIONALLY LOVE THE MOST - FATHER, MOTHER, CHILDREN ETC. IT HAS BEEN SAID THAT OUR LOVE FOR CHRIST SHOULD BE SO GREAT THAT OUR LOVE FOR OTHER THINGS WOULD SEEM LIKE HATRED IN COMPARISON. A SIMILAR PHRASE IS USED IN RELATION TO LEVITICAL PRIESTS OF THE OT WHO WERE CALLED TO FAITHFUL DEVOTION TO THE LORD & HIS WORK.

DEUTERONOMY 33:9-10 - (NIV) - (THE LEVITES) SAID OF HIS FATHER AND MOTHER, 'I HAVE NO REGARD FOR THEM.' HE DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIS BROTHERS OR ACKNOWLEDGE HIS OWN CHILDREN, BUT HE WATCHED OVER YOUR WORD AND GUARDED YOUR COVENANT. 10 HE TEACHES YOUR PRECEPTS TO JACOB AND YOUR LAW TO ISRAEL. HE OFFERS INCENSE BEFORE YOU AND WHOLE BURNT OFFERINGS ON YOUR ALTAR.

"TAKE UP YOUR CROSS" - CRUCIFIXION WAS THE MOST EXTREME AND VIOLENT FORM OF EXECUTION HUMANS EVER CREATED. NOT ONLY DID THE CRUCIFIED DIE, THEY WERE A GRAPHIC BILLBOARD FOR THE POWER THAT THEY WERE UNDER. IF YOU SAW SOMEONE CRUCIFIED OUTSIDE OF THE CITY LIMITS, (WHICH JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE SEEN), IT WOULD HAVE BEEN CLEAR THAT ROME WAS IN CHARGE. ROME WANTED EVERYONE ELSE TO KNOW THAT IF YOU GO AGAINST ROME, THIS IS WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU TOO. AS CRIMINALS CARRIED THEIR CROSSES THROUGH THE STREETS, THE RESIDENTS WOULD HAVE HAD NO QUESTION AS TO WHO THAT CRIMINAL WAS IN SUBJECTION AND SURRENDERED TO. THERE WERE ALSO NEVER INSTANCES WHEN A CRUCIFIED PERSON CHANGED THEIR MIND AND GOT OFF THE CROSS AND WENT HOME. IT WAS A DEATH SENTENCE. IN A SHOCKING MOMENT, JESUS SAYS THAT HIS DISCIPLES MUST "TAKE UP THEIR CROSS AND FOLLOW AFTER HIM", MEANING, LIVING IN SUCH A WAY THAT IT WAS CLEAR THAT YOU WERE UNDER HIS AUTHORITY AND HAD NO INTENTION TO TURN BACK.

"FIND YOUR LIFE" - THERE IS NO GREATER PURPOSE TO LIVE FOR THAN LIVING FOR CHRIST AND HIS KINGDOM. IF YOU LIVE FOR THIS WORLD, YOU MAY GAIN IT - ONLY TO LOSE IT WHEN IT PASSES AWAY. IF YOU LIVE FOR CHRIST, YOU WILL GAIN ETERNAL LIFE - THAT WHICH WILL NEVER PASS AWAY.

THESE THREE ILLUSTRATIONS BEG THE FOLLOWERS OF JESUS TO CONSIDER THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO HIM. PERFECTION IS NOT REQUIRED BUT A LOYALTY AND SINGULAR DETERMINATION IS.

MATTHEW 10:40-42 - THIS IS A SPECIAL WORK

JESUS CONCLUDES THIS TIME OF STRAIGHTFORWARDNESS WITH A WORD ABOUT THE SPECIAL REWARD THAT IS GIVEN TO THOSE WHO DO FOLLOW HIM WHEREVER HE LEADS. THE HONOR AND REWARD OF THE MESSIAH ARE UNPARALLELED AND JESUS SAYS THAT THOSE WHO ARE GOING TO DO THIS WORK IN HIS NAME WILL RECEIVE THE REWARD HE RECEIVES. THEY AREN'T JUST DOING THEIR OWN ISOLATED THING, THEY ARE A PART OF THE GREAT WORK OF GOD AND HIS PLAN OF SALVATION.

THOUGH THEIR ROLE MIGHT BE LESSER IN THEIR EYES, ANY OF THE WORK THEY ARE ABOUT TO EMBARK ON IS AN IMPORTANT AND ETERNAL WORK (EVEN JUST HANDING SOMEONE A CUP OF WATER!)