LIFE BIBLE MINISTRY

Matthew 10 (Part 5) :38-42

Representatives of Christ

Pastor Paul LeBoutillier · April 18, 2026

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

Matthew chapter 10 we're finishing up and I told you last week that we would talk a little bit more about the whole idea of taking up your cross and so that is in verse 38 and then we'll go through the end it goes like this and anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me whoever finds his life will lose it and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it he who receives you receives me and he who receives me receives the one who sent me anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophets reward and anyone who receives a righteous man because he is a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward and if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones because he is my disciple I tell you the truth he will certainly not lose his reward let's just pray quickly father God once again our prayers that you would open our hearts to gain understanding and insight from the ministry of your word use it in our lives we pray in Jesus name amen the first couple of verses that we're looking at here this morning versus 38 and 39 I'm taking them together because I feel they need to be taken together let me read them again for you Jesus says anyone who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me and then he he describes what taking up a cross means and we'll get into that in a bit when he says whoever finds his life will lose it and so forth you know there's a popular phrase that people will use you'll I'm sure you've heard it maybe you've even used it yourself it's that that phrase you know well I guess that's just my cross to bear you ever heard someone say that they'll usually say it in reference to some difficulty in life and often it's a person you know some person who's just kind of an aggravation to them you know an irritation that burr under their saddle and they'll say well I guess that's just my cross to bear I just want you to know that has nothing to do with what Jesus is referring to here when he speaks to us of taking up our cross he's not talking about something that's strugglesome he's not talking about something that is challenging in life make no mistake about it brothers and sisters in Jesus Jesus is talking about dying and that's what a cross was used for back then we'll talk more about that in just a minute as well actually this whole concept or this idea of taking up your cross is something that he repeats later on in this very gospel account it's in the 16th chapter of Matthew I'll put it up on the screen for you it's when he said to his disciples if anyone would come after me he must deny himself and that's a

bit of an addition here and take up his cross and follows me and follow me that that statement or that phrase deny himself is an important addition to our understanding what taking up our cross means because in a sense it qualifies for us if you will and gives us a greater understanding of what taking up your cross is it's what it's all about it's about denying yourself denying your desires and and wants perhaps or whatever and it's a key to understanding this now as you know once again the cross was an instrument of death and a very cruel one I will add and and whenever someone would take up their cross that was always a prequel to one thing you knew one thing was going to happen crucifixion and of course crucifixion always meant death and and Jesus took up his cross it was frankly a part of the the crucifixion process that the Romans developed a very very cruel way to put someone to death but prior to actually nailing them to the cross they would add to the humiliation and scorn that was placed upon the individual by by demanding that they actually carry physically carry that that cross to the place of crucifixion parading this person through the streets of whatever city in which they were crucified as if to basically kind of advertise the fact that this was taking place now when you saw someone carrying their cross you knew always always always always it was going to end in death okay the the association was one that couldn't be avoided carry a cross and death always went together and so it does in the fact that Jesus is calling you and I to carry our cross to take up our cross as well however Jesus is not calling us to die a physical death necessarily as much as he is calling us to die to self and to the things of this world that draw us to live for self you know and the world does doesn't it it draws us to live for self oh there is a section of a book by a W tells you that I I've read in years past and shared when we've dealt with issues of the cross and I want you to I want to beg your patience while I read you a portion of it it's it's a pager or so at least in the book it's a little bit longer I'm for those of you who are visual learners while I'm reading and I'm gonna put it up on the screen for you so that you can read along because I know that that helps some of you to really be able to kind of apprehend the words and the meaning but I want you to hear this morning what a W toes your says simply about the nature the character of the cross here's what he says he says the cross of Christ is the most revolutionary thing ever to appear among men the cross of the ancient Roman times knew no compromise it never made concessions it won all its arguments by killing its opponent and silencing him for good it spared not Christ but slew him the same as the rest he was alive when they hung him on that cross and completely dead when they took him down six hours later that was the cross the first time it appeared in Christian history after Christ was risen from the dead the apostles went out to preach his message and what they preached was the cross and wherever they went into the wide world they carried the cross and the same revolutionary power went with them the radical message of the cross transformed Saul of Tarsus and changed him from a persecutor of Christians to a tender believer and an apostle of the faith its power changed bad men into good ones it shook off the long bondage of paganism

and altered completely the whole moral and mental outlook of the Western world all this it did and continued to do as long as it was permitted to remain what it had been originally a cross its power departed when it was changed from a thing of death to a thing of beauty when men made of it a symbol hung it around their necks as an ornament or made its outline before their faces as a magic sign to ward off evil then it became at best a weak emblem at worst a fetish as such it is revered today by millions who know absolutely nothing of its power the cross affects its ends by destroying one established pattern the victims and creating another pattern its own thus it always has its way it wins by defeating its opponent and imposing its will upon him it always dominates it never compromises never dickers nor confers nor surrenders a point for the sake of peace it cares not for peace it cares only to end its opposition as fast as possible with perfect knowledge of all this Christ said if any man will come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me so the cross not only brings Christ's life to an end it ends also the first life the old life and every one of his true followers excuse me is that where so the cross not only brings Christ's life to an end it ends also the first life the old life of every one of his true followers pardon me it destroys the old pattern the atom pattern in the believers life and brings it to an end then the God who raised Christ from the dead raises the believer and a new life begins I share that with you because I couldn't have possibly said it better myself and thus we see this radical component Of Christian discipleship the cross It's what it means to be a disciple it's on the one hand we call it radical On the other hand without it Jesus said you're not worthy to be my my follower So you would have to ask yourself the question we call it radical and I think in the sense it is But is it is it radical in the sense that it's something that we shouldn't see Not at all. It's something we must see the Apostle Paul spoke of the effects of the cross on his life as If it was part of what it meant to be a believer He wrote to the Galatians in chapter 6 verse 14 on the screen and he said this May I never boast Except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ and then look at this through which the world has been crucified to me and I To the world. I got to say this is one of my favorite verses in the Bible I probably say that just about every time I read a verse but that's often the case I Love this though because it expounds so powerfully on what taking up your cross really means it's all about being crucified to the world and that's why I said that verses 38 and 39 go together because 39 Verse 39 in your Bible explains this kind of personal death to self in the world look again in your Bible verse 39 Jesus says whoever finds his life Will lose it And now here's where the cross comes in but whoever loses his life for my sake We'll find it Guys, that's the cross the cross is losing your life For the sake of Christ. Okay. It's not just losing your life It's losing your life for him Now, I don't know if You ever thought much about this But it's kind of an interesting sort of a paradox on the cross Remember an instrument of death you always die You always lose your life, but Jesus tells us here.

That's the only way to find it That's the only way to find it He starts off by saying whoever finds his life Will in fact Lose it and he's talking here about the person who's living to please self the one who is living to hang on to life To say this is my life. You know, this is that's the that's the mantra of the world, isn't it? It's my life and I'll live it how I wish and you can't tell me how to live my life Don't tell me how to live my life. It's my life. See that what you see what's going on there This is the person that says it's my life.

I'm gonna save it. I'm gonna use it. It's mine Jesus says that's the fastest way to actually lose your life The world thinks that it is actually retaining its life by doing that But in fact the world is losing its life by doing that it's it's giving up itself You know to do that this is but that whole message of of your life live your life. It's your body. It's your future It's your this it's your that isn't that just what you hear in the world all day long You know, I I thought to myself I say that to you a lot I Talk to you a lot about what you hear in the world But you know, I don't often give you examples of what you hear in the world I just kind of just reference it and I'll say what you're reading here in the Bible is the exact opposite of what you're Hearing in the world.

Well, I decided to test myself So while I was doing my studying I just quickly googled some key phrases about loving self and Protecting self and stuff like that and I took me about 10 seconds to find a quote on a on a web page from the world That basically says exactly what I'm conveying to you. So I thought you know what? I'm gonna put it on the slide and let you see it. This is a quote This is not something I want you to follow. This is a quote from the world Listen to this When you put others first at your own expense you hurt yourself in the process when you put the needs of others before yourself you diminish you and Tell your inner self notice those are capitalized That this other person matters more than you after all are you really pleasing others if you're not pleasing yourself?

There you go, by the way, I did not make that up I swear to God I I did a cut and paste right out of a website as I said took me about 10 seconds got on to Google I googled just some popular self-directed self You know phrases and it was just like boom there it was I was like, oh, it's perfect But you know, this is this is what you guys are are being bombarded with all the time Bombarded with all the time and even though you know, it's false It there's something inside of us that causes it to reverberate With a with a modicum of truth because it appeals to our flesh and our flesh is a part of who we are And there's no denying it. There's no good denying it anyway Right, I mean my flesh is a part of me I'm told to repudiate it I'm told to to crucify the flesh and yet a statement comes along and Appeals to my flesh and and my flesh is just ready and raring to go. Yes, and amen right when even though you know in my heart my mind in Christ knows that that is That is the exact opposite of what the Bible says Paul actually tells us in the

scriptures that we are to considers others as better than ourselves, right? That's not what they're telling you in the world. The world is saying the opposite of that And so you can imagine this whole idea of Taking up your cross is about as foreign to the world as you can imagine and this is the life that we live in Christ this life that is so Diametrically opposed to the message of the world in which we live But you know when you live to please self There are two very negative results that come from that Because as a Christian by the way, it is possible for us to still live for self Even though I'm a believer Even though the the spirit of the one who would Tell me to give myself away for his sake is living within me and constantly encouraging me to do that It is possible for me to resist That message to resist the Holy Spirit and instead to choose self over him.

So it's very possible Don't think I mean everybody everybody who's ever walked with the Lord for any amount of time knows that But what happens when you and I do live for self Well, the very first thing that happens is is it causes us to fail to recognize the very purpose of our being In fact it begins to suggest to us that our purpose for being Is to be happy and that's what the world wants and that's what they're searching for Personal happiness. I just want to be happy. That is the that is the the echo of the world Life for you and I is not about that sort of a thing our attitude about life It's supposed to be taken from the life of Jesus himself. Is it not? I love what Jesus said It's actually recorded in Mark chapter 10 Verse 45 love this passage.

Jesus says this the Son of Man did not come to be served But to serve right That is the essence of what you and I are called to live the Son of Man did not come to be served But to serve others That's what you and I are called to the second negative thing that it pursuit produces in our life Is it causes us to actually well like Jesus said causes us to lose our lives That's pretty negative. That's a big negative You live for your you live for self and you will lose your life Lose your life and By the way We find our life And the way we find our life is to lose it for his sake and I don't know if you've ever wondered what that means Have you ever stopped to kind of ask yourself Lord? How can I lose my life for your sake? There is a wonderful and I hope this passage is in our slides there's a wonderful illustration that Jesus gave of this in John chapter 12 and And I love this because Jesus makes things so interesting and insightful through illustrations, but he says I tell you the truth unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies it remains only a single seed, but if it dies It produces many seeds Now I want you to look at that verse for a moment The question that we naturally want to ask ourselves is what does that have to do with? Giving my life for Christ.

Well, what that's what Jesus is trying to illustrate for you. I want you to imagine for a moment that you are so poor or at least you think yourself so poor that all you have left is a single kernel of wheat okay now

you have a choice of what you're going to do with that kernel of wheat you can determine in your heart that you're going to keep it for yourself and not give it away use it for anything I want this this is my kernel of wheat and I'm not letting it go it's the last one I have but you know there's an interesting correlation between a kernel of wheat and your life they were both created to be multiplied you hang on to that kernel of wheat right here in your hand and refuse to let it go and it will remain a single kernel of wheat so by saving it in a sense you are losing its capabilities and all you will have is one single kernel of wheat and that's really not much good to anyone but if you are willing to lose that kernel of wheat by planting it you will find that you are actually saving it by what it produces and that is more seeds more wheat and Jesus was giving an illustration of your life in my life after that picture of a kernel of wheat and he's saying to you and I I did not give you your life to hang on to selfishly you were created to multiply but the way you multiply is the same way a kernel of wheat multiplies isn't interesting that he says unless a kernel of wheat falls into the ground and dies technically speaking that kernel of wheat doesn't die he uses that word picture because what do you do with the kernel of wheat in order to plant it you put it in the ground which is which is what the picture of burial you see it's a picture of death unless that kernel of wheat appears to have died literally gives itself and is buried unto death it will not ever be used or grow or sprout and and and and gain its life its purpose and the same is true for you and I if we will not submit to death to self on the cross you will never live your life for the purpose to which it was intended by God and that is to be multiplied how are our lives multiplied in Christ by bringing others into the kingdom by sharing the love and the grace and the power and the wisdom of God with others in the world but we do that by giving our life away spending our lives for others and so forth and that is what Jesus refers to as finding your life that is when you find your life you find who you really are I was meant to be multiplied but just like that kernel of wheat I have to die in Christ and be planted and nurtured in him so that I might grow up and so what we're basically saying is as long as you're living a life of selfishness you will never be who God called you to be but if you're willing to be on the cross with Christ take up your cross and follow him and die to self and your personal worldly self-centered desires God will use your life for the way it was originally intended to reach others for Christ and you'll find your life now the last three verses of the chapter say this he who receives you receives me and he who receives me receives the one who sent me what's Jesus saying here don't you see brothers and sisters in Jesus this whole chapter has been about identification and association if you notice that Jesus starts off in this chapter by telling his disciples listen guys I'm sending you out but I want you to know now that you're associated with me now that you are identified with me there's going to be a fallout from that and I just wanted to prepare you for it and some of it's going to be quite negative you're going to be arrested some of you are not in this particular sending out but later on you know you guys are gonna go through some pretty serious persecutions simply because

you are mine and that's what identification is all about but you know what there's a positive side to the identification process of being identified with Christ and he says it here if somebody receives you they receive me and the one who sent me who is my father of course Jesus speaking see that's a pretty pretty cool side of identification isn't it in other words what Jesus is saying is not everybody's going to reject you some are actually going to receive you and when they receive you they receive me and when they receive me they receive my father that's cool and that is that wonderful representation that we have in Jesus he goes on to say in verse 41 in fact he says and then he mentions three different ways that you and I can be recognized in the world look what he says verse 41 anyone who receives a prophet because he's a prophet will receive a prophets reward you say well obviously that's not me going to the next one no no no no no way don't go too quickly you can be received as a prophet do you know what a prophet is you know what a prophet does they speak God's Word they give God's message do you know Christians that by simply sharing life in Jesus and the message of salvation in him and him alone you are speaking forth the very Word of God you are speaking prophetically because you're speaking a message given by God to people in the basic definition of a prophet is one who hears the voice of God and speaks to the people that's it well have you heard the voice of God do you know how a person is saved speak it to the people and you are speaking prophetically you're giving God's message sometimes it's even a little more divine it's a little more intentional than that sometimes God will actually just lay a message on your heart for another person specifically I just feel like God wants me to tell you whatever it is doesn't really matter what is is coming out of your mouth in terms of the message of the Lord the message of the Lord is the important thing and that means that you're speaking prophetically and Jesus specifically says here if anyone who receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophets reward and anyone who receives a righteous man because he's a righteous man will receive a righteous man's reward why would they look at you and see you as a righteous man or woman as the case may be because they see the righteousness of Christ in us they don't see a personal righteousness and I hope people can see that that we are not righteous in and of ourselves are we that would be self-righteous the world likes to call us self-righteous the fact of the matter is if we're really truly born-again Christians there's no such thing as self-righteousness it doesn't exist we are righteous in Christ we are righteous because it has been imputed to us by faith and some people are going to see that they're gonna recognize it and then look at the last thing verse 42 and if anyone gives a cup of cold water even to one of these little ones because he's my disciple I tell you the truth he will certainly not lose his reward this is not saying if you go around giving watered children that there's a reward necessarily little children here when he talks about a little child or little ones if you will he's not referring necessarily to little children at all he's referring to his children he's referring to Christians why does he refer to us as little ones because that's the way the world sees us we are we are the have-nots we

are the weak ones and rightly so we are the vulnerable ones in their eyes and rightly so everything you would probably ascribe to a child you know being weak and vulnerable and and and and have not that's us in Christ right and so he says you know even someone who gives a cup of cold water something as seemingly insignificant as a cup of cold water because you give somebody a cup of cold water it's not gonna be long before they're going to thirst again seems like wow I haven't done that much Jesus tells us here that the God who keeps perfect records will in fact reward that individual so isn't that interesting so when the world rejects us because of our identification with Christ we get a reward when the world receives us because of our identification with Christ they get a reward either way there's rewards kind of being given out here because when we are received well actually you look at it both ways when we are rejected it is not we who are being rejected it is Christ who is being rejected when we are being received it is not we ourselves who are being received truly it is Christ who is being received and that is total representation total identification you see how this chapter is all been about identification from really beginning to end how we are identified with Christ even to the point of doing what Jesus did taking up a cross dying to self that others may live music music music music