



32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.³³ But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.³⁴ Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.³⁵ For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.³⁶ And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.³⁷ He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.³⁸ And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.³⁹ He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.⁴⁰ He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.⁴¹ He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.⁴² And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward. 1. And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities. (Matt 10:32-42, 11:1)

We are faced today with an increasing pressure to omit the name of Jesus Christ in Prayer. In fact, we are faced with pressure not to pray publicly at all. This does not agree with the Word of God. Remember how Daniel prayed? He opened the window and prayed before it for all to see – at a time when prayer would mark him for committal to the Lions' den.

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.” We are reminded here of the grave consequences of denying Christ by omission. Though a great blessing accrues to those who are adamant in their public confession of Christ, those who use political correctness as a justification for avoiding the Name above every other name risk losing all the rewards of Heaven as well as evoking for themselves the prospect of an eternity in Hell. Is the favor of the crowd really worth such a loss?

“Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.” The ancient regime of sin and wickedness is deep-rooted in the hearts of men. Righteous living and Godly faith are hostile values to this old system and constitute its natural enemy. The Coming of Christ signaled the battle cry of a new order based on grace and Godly faith. But, though peace and liberty may be the end, there may often be required a fierce war in order that the object of true peace be achieved. Satan will not abandon the battlefield without overpowering force. We all stand on one side or the other of this battle line which may run through the center of families and split asunder the familial sentiments of parents and child. Christ quotes His Word from Micah 7:6 – *“For the son dishonoureth the father, the daughter riseth up against her mother, the daughter in law against her mother in law; a man's enemies are the men of his own house.”* Such an internecine war is more intense than that waged against every other mortal enemy even if the sentiments of the one hand is altogether righteous. The terms of conflict are love versus hate – the two cannot exist together.

“He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.” The very source and fountainhead of love resides in Christ. How could we love the Sunlight and hate the Sun? The pot can never be on a par with the potter. God made father, mother, son, and daughter. How can we place a greater premium on the gift than we do on the Giver? Love for mother or father is subject to perish, but that love placed on deposit with Christ is on an eternal deposit.

“And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.” We cannot enjoy the fruit without the tree. Christ is the first-fruits of the tree at Calvary. *“But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”* (1 Cor 15:20-22) If there are first fruits, there must follow other fruit. We are that other fruit in Christ. When we partake of that same cup of which He drank, we are covenanting to go the same way via the cross. We must deny self and assert the riches of Christ. We do not take up our cross once and for all, but DAILY. (Luke 9:23) If we will follow the Way of Christ to Heaven, we must follow all the way through the Via Dolorosa – the Way of the Cross! We subordinate our desires and passions to those of Christ if we will be the burning, lower Lights of the World. The Cup we take in Holy Communion symbolizes our daily dying to self and living for Christ.

“He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.” Here Christ proclaims a wonderful and beautiful mystery that only a true child of God can grasp. Our desperate hopes and lives were buried with Christ after which they enjoyed a marvelous grant of, not only a new life, but an eternal one as well, through His resurrection. This is the Seed planted and the fruit reaped thereby. We are fruits from that first fruit and we, too, must be planted in death to self in order to ‘find our lives’. Only by surrendering our lives to Christ can we find them. The Bread of Communion symbolizes the crushed seed of the church (those who belong to Christ). Thousands of crushed seed comprise One Bread (the Body of Christ). We, too, will be crushed in order to be molded into that One Bread. Archbishop Cranmer tells us that *“Christ was the first Seed, and now we are those seed, too, that must be made part of the whole Seed of Christ.”*

“He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent

me." We are emissaries of Christ. We come to others in His name. We receive our firm foundation in the grace of God through the Son whom God has sent. And now we are sent as well in the Name of Christ. Those who receive our true testimony also receive Christ, our Crown Sovereign.

"He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward." Any contractual agreement to which we are co-signers binds us as mutual respondents to the terms of the contract. Being agents of Christ, we act (lawfully) in His Name. We are commissioned by our 'Head of State' to act on His behalf. An officer in the military is commissioned by the President of the United States to act with the authority of the President. So are we commissioned to act with the authority of Christ as long as we act on the terms of Christ. The prophet is received of the people of God as the widow received Elisha: *"I perceive that this is an holy man of God, which passeth by us continually. Let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall; and let us set for him there a bed, and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick: and it shall be, when he cometh to us, that he shall turn in thither."* (2 Kings 4:9-10) The prophet (especially in New Testament terms) does not necessarily predict future events, but preaches the Word of God. If we know the Word of God well, we will know the future well as pertains to the Kingdom.

"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward." Christ is concluding a descending order of equal grace to all parts – first God the Father to the Son (vv 40), then to the prophet to the righteous man (vv 41), and now all the way to the level of the smallest in the Kingdom of God – the little child. Children (either in age or in spiritual growth) often suffer the worst of the hate of the world. *"Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones."* (Zech 13:7) The gift that seems the smallest (cup of water) may be the one of greatest value, for life is preserved by water. Such small tokens of love to the smallest in the Kingdom are gifts which are cherished and loved by Christ. The innocent faith of a child is exactly the kind of faith that we should not outgrow.

"And it came to pass, when Jesus had made an end of commanding his twelve disciples, he departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities." After firmly counseling and commanding His disciples, Jesus set forth to do all those things He has commanded. He does not counsel us to take up our crosses daily and follow Him without first taking up His own cross. He "departed thence" to preach and to teach. He went forth to the world at hand to fulfill the Will of His Father. We go forth in His Name to the world at hand to preach and to teach the Gospel. Will all receive in faith? Not at all! Have we wasted our time in preaching? Not at all! For the Word is a two-edged sword – it cuts both ways and His Word shall accomplish its purpose wherever it is preached. *"So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth: it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it."* (Isaiah 55:11) The purposes of God in our preaching are not our great concern, only the preaching and teaching of it is of greatest importance. To those who reject His Word, God has a purpose. These shall not stand in the Day of Judgment with the claim that "no one ever told me." They shall be disarmed in their wickedness through preaching. It both convicts and condemns.

Which has been the impact on your hearing of it?