Lifegroup Study (AM) – 8 July 2018

**Matthew 10 – The Heart of Discipleship**

**INTRODUCTION**

When Pastor Adam first became a Christian, he did so for selfish reasons – in order to experience the fullness of life Jesus offers. Like every spiritual infant, he needed to mature. Maturing as a Christian means becoming progressively less self-centred and progressively more Christ-centred. Where you are at in that process of spiritual maturity will affect how you interpret and receive some of Jesus’ more difficult teachings. But the key with Jesus’ more difficult teaching is to **remember who He is.** Jesus left the glory of heaven to be one of us. He taught us to love our enemies, to be peacemakers. He healed the sick, sheltered the accused, challenged the hypocrites, fed the poor. Most of all, He died on a cross while praying for the forgiveness those who were killing him. And then He rose from the dead, never to die again. This Jesus, God in the flesh has all authority, *and* we can trust Him. He is good. Always.

**KEY SCRIPTURES**

**READ Matthew 10:32-42**

**32**“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. **33**But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven.**34**“Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. **35**For I have come to ‘seta man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; **36**and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own 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 finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it. **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 gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward.”

**KEY QUOTES**

* “True life, real fulfilment, is found neither by the line of least resistance nor by aggressive self-assertion.” (Bible scholar R. T. France)
* “You cannot live in fellowship with *Jesus the Lord* on your own terms – because that would then make you Lord. To live in fellowship with Jesus the Lord you do so on *His* terms; that is what ‘Lord’ means.” (Adam Dodds)
* Bishop Lesslie Newbigin says “It is the very heart of the gospel that is both gives everything and requires everything.”
* Bible scholar William Barclay: “It is sometimes only when a person buries their personal aims and ambitions that they begin to be of real use to God.”

**KEY POINTS FROM SERMON**

***Note for leaders:*** *Allow the text to speak for itself and use these points to focus the conversation or clarify anything that comes up from the discussion questions. You do not need to retell the sermon using these points.*

* Some things are important but not all things are significant. Important things can divide people (e.g. politics) but most of all this is true of Jesus, because there is nothing or no one more significant about which people must decide. In the end there can be no neutrality.
* The **cost of discipleship** is not insisting on your own way. It is not clinging to your life but giving it up for Jesus. It is trusting Him in every aspect of life.
* The **cost of non-discipleship** is a life without abiding peace. This is a life not penetrated through by love and faith, without power to do what is right and ultimately withstand the forces of evil. In short, the cost of *non-discipleship* is not experiencing the abundant life Jesus came to bring (John 10:10).
* There are certain things that are lost by being kept close and are saved by being used. Giving your life up for Jesus – living a life of surrender – living with an open hand before Him, is the pathway to living life to the full.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1. If you heard the sermon, was there anything God spoke to you about personally from this message?
2. Within this passage, what insights into God’s character do you find?
3. What does this passage teach us about God's purposes for His people?
4. In verse 34-36, Jesus uses a metaphor (sword) where the term ‘set against’ literally means ‘separate’. Has there been a time when this has been of particular relevance to you?
5. Consider this verse with the key points about the cost of discipleship vs the cost of non-discipleship: vs19 “*If you cling to your life, you will lose it; but if you give up your life for me, you will find it.”* Discuss the difference between the two.
6. **James 1:22** says “*Don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves*.” Is there anything that God is asking you to stop, start or continue in this passage? What is the next step you need to take in response to God’s word? (i.e. obedience)

**PRAYER POINTS**

* For us to grow in our understanding of who Jesus is as Saviour *and* Lord
* For us to grow mature to be able to understand and accept Jesus teachings – even when it seems difficult
* For us to willingly “take up our cross and follow Him” and find life through Jesus