

Mission Results
Matt 10: 32-42

Friends, one of the nice things about living here in Calgary is that we're only a short drive away from the mountains.

It's very easy to hop in the car and drive out to Banff, or Kananaskis and go for a hike to admire the spectacular scenery and the amazing views and perhaps even spot some wildlife.

Now I'm not really an avid hiker, I'm not particularly crazy about navigating a trail through the woods, worrying about meeting a bear or being stalked by a cougar, especially if we've got our little dog along with us.☺ I don't relish the thought of climbing up steep rock faces, and finding my way across an alpine meadow and crossing mountain streams isn't at the top my list of things to do on a Saturday morning...

So if you invited me to go and hike up Mt. Rundle or Mt. Temple I'd probably have some reservations about undertaking what would most likely be a tough hike through some difficult terrain.

(However, because I'm a guy I probably wouldn't let on to that... lest you think I'm soft!)

But if you could probably convince me to undertake this difficult hike by saying something like *"It's a bit of a difficult hike and there are some really tough sections on the way, but it's worth it...because you'll have gotten some exercise, you'll get fresh air and feel better and you'll have spent some time getting to know the people you're hiking with better!"*

You see friends, there are things that you will do, things that you will tolerate, and things that you will endure... because of the results that will occur.

We will study difficult subjects to become smarter; we will push ourselves through a grueling workout to loose the weight;

We will do certain things in life because the results, the things that happen because of it are worth it.

And last week we heard Jesus give us mission warnings so that any idealism we might harbor about embarking on mission would turn into a healthy realism.

In fact, Jesus warned us that the very people who we will go out to help may not appreciate our help. They might turn on us; they can turn from sheep into wolves!

Friends, as we go out into our community to reach children and youth and lead them to Christ, it will not be an easy walk in the park – it's going to be a tough hike!

Now the goal of such warnings is of course not to discourage us, but to temper us, to transform us from idealistic church attendees into seasoned missionaries.

But idealism dies hard - so Jesus spends the bulk of Matthew 10, a whole 23 verses going over warnings so that any remaining misconceptions we may have are dealt with. So this week we continue to look at the rest of the warnings he gives us in vs. 32-42 because it may just might be that we're thinking...

“ok – its going to be a tough hike...I can deal with that because I'm certain that the results of ministering to kids and youth and families will be worth it.”

I can just picture a family sitting around a table together – sharing instead of fighting, spending quality time together, I can see how the lives of youth will be turned around by learning good values, and how children will be nurtured through healthy parenting! Bring on the tough hike...the results will be worth it!

But friends, Jesus wants to warn us that going out into the community to gather in the sheep, and feed and water them will bring about results... but they might not be the results we anticipated.

There are three things that Jesus warns, can and most likely will, happen.

So let's start by looking at vs. 32-33. *“Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father*

in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men I will disown him before my Father in heaven.”

Friends, going on this mission will result in our being put in situations where we must take a risk in revealing our loyalty and stand up for Jesus.

Friends this is about what we are willing to say publically about Jesus. And we’re not talking about when we come to church on Sunday morning and with a bunch of other like minded people we say “I believe in Jesus Christ, God’s only begotten Son, our Lord” Because mission is about going out of the church, into the community.

This is about what we will say in front of our family - *who thinks anyone who gets into religion is a bit crazy,*

Our friends at work - *who think there is something morally wrong to claim there is one way to the truth!*

Our neighbors – *who happen to be devout Muslims.*

Going on the mission means that we’re saying - we acknowledge... we recognize... we admit... that Jesus Christ is who he claims to be.

John 8:12 *“I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”*

John 11:25 *“I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die”*

John 14:6 *“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.*

John 14:11 *“Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me”*

It’s revealing you believe this in front of people whom you like and respect, and who up until now have liked and respected you – because you appeared to be like them.

But now you are going to reveal you’re different, because deep down you acknowledge Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.

That you are actually are his ambassador and that you've come to extend the invitation to them and to their children to be a part of God's family by believing in Jesus Christ – and you don't know how they will respond.

So friends, the first result of this tough mission will be that you may be perceived as a crazy religious nut, a fanatic fundamentalist, or a narrow minded intolerant person.

Now let's look at verses 34-36 - *"Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law ³⁶ a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.*

Friends, when people respond to the invitation to become part of God's family through Jesus it can put them at odds with their human family.

All the relationships which Jesus mentions here are ones that typically involved some sort of mentoring or teaching or passing on life lessons. A father raises his son and hands over the family business to him, A mother raises her daughter and

teaches her how to be a mother and raise children, a mother-in-law instructs a daughter-in-law on the "rules and roles" of the family she is marrying into.

But when people, especially children and youth respond to the invitation to become a part of God's family – and their parents don't...this is a recipe for conflict.

Their parents will want to pass on their ideals, their values, their beliefs about the life, the world and what it's all about.

But, their Heavenly Father will be working in their hearts and minds through the Holy Spirit and through scripture – ***and through our mission efforts***...to teach them His values, His truth and His perspective on life.

The stage is set for a competition between family ties – which family will claim the loyalty of the children? For those who choose loyalty to God's family it will bring conflict and dissension into their earthly family. They will have to reject whatever values and beliefs their parents hold that are not based on scripture, and follow Christ instead.

Now this dichotomy between biblical and non-biblical might seem a bit vague in our community because families here value love, respect, taking care of the environment, giving to the poor etc...

But a scholar by the name of Christian Smith examined the religious beliefs and values of the average North American teenager and discovered that their inherited beliefs, which he calls Moralistic Therapeutic Deism, can be summarized in these five points.

- 1. A God exists who created and orders the world and watches over human life on earth.*
- 2. God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions.*
- 3. The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about one- self.*
- 4. God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when he is needed to resolve a problem.*
- 5. Good people go to heaven when they die.*

This is the belief system that most parents are passing on to their children these days – and it's false, Christ's teachings are opposed to it.

So friends, the second result of this mission will be that families will experience division and conflict around what is ultimately true and worth basing your life on and what is not.

Now let's look at vs. 37-39 *"Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. ³⁸ Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹ Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.*

Now when people, especially children and youth convert to Jesus' teachings and reject any unbiblical values and beliefs their parents may have – it's a struggle. It produces internal conflict, suffering – and temptation.

Friends, the temptation is to go back, to resolve the internal conflict and restore that relationship by accepting their unbiblical teachings and thus denying your loyalty to what Jesus teaches.

Remember Jesus said *“Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me...Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching.”*

John 14:21-24

The third result of our mission will be that children, and youth may need to suffer, they will have to carry their cross – live with the burden of being in conflict with those who are closest to them and resist the temptation to resolve that conflict by denying the truth.

So friends, we were warned last week that this mission would be a tough hike, now we’ve just heard Jesus describe to us all the wonderful results that will most likely happen because of this mission.

So why would we, in our right mind, go on this mission? Its going to be a tough hike, the results are less than inspiring, where’s the motivation?

Friends the motivation is what Jesus has working to keep us focused on all along – Himself.

He sends us on this mission in his name, it’s not about success, it’s not about the ideals, it’s not about the results – it’s all about Jesus

Jesus is the reward – if we are loyal to Jesus he will acknowledge us before God, If we love him we are worthy of Him, if we loose our life for his sake we will find it.

Friends, do you know Jesus? have you experienced his love and grace, his gentleness, his care and compassion?

If the answer is yes then this is why we are motivated to go on this mission in spite of the challenges that face us, because Jesus is the reward for anyone who receives us as Christ’s ambassadors.

Friends, we know how amazing Jesus is- and we want this for others, especially for children and youth and their families.

Look at vs. 40 – Jesus says *“anyone who receives you receives me! And also receives God the Father who sent me”*

Friends the good news is that little old you and I can bring Jesus to people, by going out on this mission and simply being loyal to Christ no matter what the cost.

So let's look at the final verse of this chapter, vs. 41-42
"Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. ⁴² And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward."

Friends this is why it's important that we go on this mission with no other motivation than Jesus, this is why Jesus has spent 23 verses giving us warnings about mission.

You see if we go on this mission with our idealism of how everyone will welcome us and what we have to say – we go out as a prophet, and whoever responds will simply get our idealism, and our words as their reward.

If we go out expecting to see good moral results in the lives of families and children – we go out as a righteous person – and whoever responds will simply receive good morals as their

reward. And friends, our idealism, what we have to say, and good morals are only temporary rewards at best, they don't last

But...if we go out as "a little one", as one who has been stripped of our idealism and our results oriented mentality, as one who has been disciplined and trained by Christ – like we have been over these last two weeks – then anyone who receives *us* as someone who knows Christ, who is Christ's ambassador – then they receive *Christ* as their reward!

And friends, when we see children, youth and families acknowledge Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior..... It makes all the danger, conflict, and suffering of the mission worthwhile.

Because it's our reward too; it's the spectacular view that awaits us at the end of that tough hike.

So no matter how tough, no matter what results occur, friends we need to go on this mission, we need to endure this mission because children and youth in our community need Christ – and we're the ones trained to be his missionaries. Amen.