

²⁴ “The student is not above the teacher, nor a servant above his master. ²⁵ It is enough for students to be like their teachers, and servants like their masters. If the head of the house has been called Beelzebul, how much more the members of his household!

²⁶ “So do not be afraid of them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be disclosed, or hidden that will not be made known. ²⁷ What I tell you in the dark, speak in the daylight; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the roofs. ²⁸ Do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather, be afraid of the One who can destroy both soul and body in hell. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father’s care. ³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

³² “Whoever acknowledges me before others, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before others, I will disown before my Father in heaven.

³⁴ “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.’

³⁷ “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.

QUESTION

1. What does Jesus mean in verses 24 & 25? State this in your own words.

2. What does Jesus mean in verses 26& 28” Again, state this in your own words.

3. Why does Jesus say that the disciples should not fear these persecutors, even when their lives are being threatened?

4. Why does Jesus say that he has not come to bring peace to the earth?**Discussion**

1. Matthew is writing to believers in the early church, most likely of Jewish background, who are experiencing persecution from the Jewish leadership which is trying to squash the followers of Jesus. The early chapters of Acts share how the disciples were arrested, beaten, imprisoned and even martyred for their belief in Jesus, Jesus describes how even family members would turn against each other. They would turn each other into the authorities under the duress of punishment or excommunication/shunning by the rest of the community. It was very dangerous to claim faith in Jesus at times. How does this Scripture offer strength and encouragement to these early readers of Matthew's gospel?

2. The church was not always looked upon disparagingly by outsiders, indeed there were some who took advantage of the reputation afforded to the Christian believers and tried to market themselves, to prosper from it, by posing as evangelists who solicited resources from innocent followers. One of the things that persecution did was to cleanse the church of such frauds, false teachers, who when pressed for their faith quickly abandoned all claims to Christ. How might the Church today be able to identify fraudulent charlatans who profess Christ but are really only seeking to get rich off fooling people. How might we recognize those who make personal gain from the name of Christ?