

S.O.H.L.

WEEKLY MINISTRY MEDITATIONS

Pronounced "Soul"

December 26, 2016

That does it - "I quit!"

MATTHEW 10:34 NKJV – (34) "Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword."

Anybody out there tired of being abused? Weary of being treated unkindly? Are you neglected by your love ones even as they claim to be a child of God?

I believe in **Matthew 10:34** above. Jesus is pointing to a reality that many of us recognize. Following his teachings? Being guided by his example? Loving the way Jesus loved? At a minimum, following his lead will invite conflict into your closest relationships.

The message of Jesus is summarized by "love God and love others". While this statement is routinely used and appears benign, it is actually quite controversial. Why? Well, loving people will always be controversial. Should you accept this mission to love the world, it will wreak havoc in your relationships. In fact, Jesus claims it will put tension on the relationships closest to you. Your parents, in-laws, children... loving God and loving others can potentially put



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you at odds with anyone who is not ready to love quite as radically as you are.

Loving God and loving others *presents you with a choice* - maintain the status quo, or risk becoming an outcast, even within your own family? Jesus is essentially saying to us - "Don't even bother pretending you want to follow me if you're not willing to be an outsider in your own family."(v37) And that's a tough choice. Jesus, in this passage, is expressing a sentiment he shared at the beginning of his ministry. "A prophet is not without honor except in his own hometown and among his own family." (**Mark 6:4, Matthew 13:57, Luke 4:24**)

There will be conflict between good and evil, the Christ and the antichrist, the light and the darkness, the children of God (believers) and the children of the devil (those who refuse Christ). This conflict can and does happen within a family when some are believers and others are not. We should seek to be at peace with all men but should never forget that **Jesus warned we would be hated for His sake**. Those who reject him hate him and they will also hate his followers (**John 15:18**). Quitting is not the answer. Standing for Christ is the answer! Supporting each other through actions and words is absolutely key!

Jesus is not inviting division; He is asking us to make up our mind for whom we will serve.

SCRIPTURE READING: LUKE 12:49-52

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK: A true disciple must take up his cross and follow Jesus.