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Disciples Can Also Expect Reception; Matthew 10:40-42

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Introduction – As Jesus has been preparing His disciples for their mission, the bulk of His message to them has been to prepare them for certain persecution. They expect that when they spread the news that the long-awaited promised Messiah has arrived, certainly there will be celebration and revival as people rejoice to hear the good news.

Jesus prepares them for what they might not have anticipated. Many will not rejoice. In fact, many will despise, many will argue, many will discourage, many will oppose, and indeed, many will seek to silence the disciples and their message by any means necessary. Darkness will not welcome the light.

So Jesus wants His disciples to be prepared for everything from push-back to imprisonment, from rejection to physical brutality. In fact, they should expect it because after all, if they call Him Satan, what will they do to them (v25).

As we have been studying Matt 10, we've continued to make application to our day as well. If Jesus' disciples are often greeted with persecution, and we are Jesus' disciples today, then we too can expect to be persecuted as we live the gospel, stand for truth, and share the good news of Jesus Christ. We will be maligned. We will be harassed. We will be overlooked for the promotion. We will be asked to keep our religion to ourselves. We will be unfriended. We will be challenged. We will be falsely accused. We will be cut off. We may suffer the loss of employment, opportunity, relationships, and more. We may even suffer harm.

Why take the risk? Why put ourselves out there if we are sure to face persecution? Why step outside of our comfort and security and put our lives on the line if people are sure to respond with vengeful hate and scorn? The answer is because we are not only sure to encounter persecution, we are sure to encounter reception! Some family members will receive the truth. Some friends will receive the gospel. Some people will rejoice upon hearing the good news. Some will love the light! Disciples can not only expect persecution, they can expect reception!

- I. When Someone Receives a Disciple, More Than a Disciple is Received
 - a. “whoever receives you” What does that mean? We know it doesn’t mean, “whoever plans a reception of finger foods to welcome your arrival.” We know it doesn’t mean, “whoever receives you into their home,” although it could include that.
 - i. To receive a disciple means to believe the disciple. To believe that the message the disciple brings is the truth.
 - ii. Remember, the disciples’ message? (v7) The disciples’ message is the gospel. It’s the good news. God has made good on His promise. He has sent salvation. He has sent His Son. Believe on Jesus Christ. Repent from your sinful ways. Turn from yourself and turn to the Savior. The kingdom of heaven is here. Believe.
 - iii. And those who believe are those who receive.
 - b. Now watch the progression that Jesus makes about receiving or believing. “whoever receives you receives me.” What does that mean? How does a person believing the report of a disciple result in receiving Jesus?
 - i. Because the message of the disciple is a message about Jesus. It’s not a message about the disciple. The hearer is receiving, that is, believing, the good news about Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God. He is the Savior. Forgiveness is found in Him. He is Life and Salvation. If you receive that message, you receive Christ. If you believe that message, you are believing on Christ.
 - c. Then the progression goes even further. “and whoever receives me receives Him who sent me.” In other words, if you receive the Son, you receive the Father. When you believe in the Son unto salvation, you are reconciled then to the Father!
 - d. The ultimate reception of the good news is God Himself. The greatest good of the good news is God. The chief blessing of eternal salvation is God. Reconciled. Justified. Adopted.
 - e. 1 John 4:14-15
 - f. We share the good news and we stand for the truth of Scripture and we live the gospel before the world because the greatest news about the good news is God Himself. We shout it from the rooftops – v27.
 - g. It may cost us our social standing. It may cost us our relationships. It may cost us economically. It may cost us physically. It might even be our path to heaven in death. But if one loved one, if one friend, if one

member of the Grassy Pond community, if one student at Gaffney High, if one Kenyan receives our message – if just one believes on Christ, then they have God for eternity – it will be worth it all!

- h. Who's Your One?
 - i. But there's more.

- II. Reception Multiplies Blessing
 - a. Reception not only means believing unto salvation, reception means receiving the blessings of faith and good works.
 - b. 2 questions we need to ask of this verse.
 - i. What does it mean to receive a prophet or a righteous man?
 - ii. What does it mean to receive a prophet's reward or a righteous man's reward when we receive them?
 - c. A prophet is one who tells the word of God. It is the prophet's calling to announce to others the words of God. In Bible times, the prophet heard from the Lord and repeated the words to the people. And the prophet was met with both persecution and reception. A prophet in our day is one who studies the words of the prophets and apostles in the OT and NT and proclaims to others the words of God.
 - i. When the word of God is rightly and faithfully and accurately proclaimed, we the listeners have two options before us. We can reject the prophet, we can refuse the prophet's message, we can argue and disagree with the prophet's message, and by so doing, actually set ourselves against the Lord and His Word.
 - ii. Or we can joyfully receive the prophet. We can gladly submit to the prophet's message. We can rejoice with gratitude that God's Word has been explained and proclaimed. We can be thrilled to have heard the words of God for us.
 - iii. To receive a prophet is to receive his message as God's Word.
 - d. A righteous man is one who lives the word of God. A righteous man is the man who walks in the Word, aligns His life according to the word of God. He is like a tree planted by streams of water. He bears the fruit of the spirit.
 - i. We can reject him and his ways. We can go our own way. Choose our own path, and by so doing, reject the path of the Lord.

- ii. Or we can receive him. We can follow his example of faith. We can pattern our lives after the Word of God.
 - e. As we do receive that prophet, as we do receive that righteous man, Jesus declares we also receive their reward. The blessings of the prophet and the blessings of the righteous man will be ours as well because we have received their counsel and we have followed their example. Wherever their path leads them, it will lead us as well.
 - f. What is the prophet's reward? What is the righteous person's reward that we will share in as we receive them? (11:9-11) The surpassing joy of living a life that is pleasing to God! There is no greater reward than the smile of the Father!
- III. When Someone Gives to a Disciple, There is More Than Giving
- a. Giving leads to receiving. Giving leads to receiving far more than if we would have withheld rather than give.
 - b. When we give to a disciple, we give to the gospel – even if it's as simple as a cup of cold water to refresh that disciple in his mission, in his life.
 - i. 3 John 5-8
 - c. When we give to a disciple, we give to the Lord – even if it's as simple as a cup of cold water.
 - i. Matthew 25:34-40
 - d. The reward of giving to disciples is the support of gospel and pleasure of the One who is the glory of the gospel!
 - e. The joy of giving to the Lord is that you can't possibly out-give the Lord!
 - f. So you see, with all that it may cost us to believe the gospel, live the gospel, and share the gospel, the reward of the gospel far surpasses the price!
 - g. 2 Cor 4:16-18

Conclusion – When we live the gospel and share the gospel and stand for the true gospel – there is always far more to gain than we could ever lose! Jim Elliot said it best before he was martyred for taking the gospel to an unreached tribe. “He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose!”