

Bible reading Matthew 10:24-39

Bursting to tell

THIS WEEK WE EXPLORE THE CONSEQUENCES OF SHARING OUR FAITH.

There are some very challenging words in this passage; Jesus presents some stark imagery about sharing our faith. How do you think Jesus is perceived today? What is society's view of him and the Church? In the light of that, what is the true cost of discipleship for us? What is sacrificial living and how do we do it?



This week is Refugee Week. https://refugeeweek.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/RW_logo_RGB_black.jpg It celebrates the resilience and creativity of refugees. How might the logo reflect that? What might the different colours represent? Or the shape? Can you think of any examples of creativity and resilience when you, or someone close to you, has faced hardship? How do people endure periods of suffering? What might a logo for persecuted Christians look like?

Explore what sacrifice means to you by making a collage picture.

You will need: sheets of paper (e.g. strips of wallpaper), magazines, newspapers, a range of craft materials as available. Use images of famous people who have led sacrificial lives, or situations that depict sacrificial acts or living, or headlines that do the same. Add your own words and colours – whatever you are drawn to do, to create something beautiful. And try to include something in your collage that depicts Jesus' sacrifice.

CREATE

Read the following quote from Henri Nouwen: 'Who can save a child from a burning house without taking the risk of being hurt by the flames? Who can listen to a story of loneliness and despair without taking the risk of experiencing similar pains in his own heart and even losing his precious peace of mind? In short: Who can take away suffering without entering it?' (from *The Wounded Healer*). Think about times when you have had to stand up or take risks for your faith, or have encountered conflict due to your faith. What are the costs of discipleship for you? Make these concerns part of your prayer this week.

REFLECT

Bible notes

There's something about the call of Jesus that could leave us feeling fearful. So, three times Jesus says 'don't be afraid' (vv:26, 28 and 31). We should fear God, for out of that relationship comes the ability to face whatever the world throws at us. So, he stresses that we should not keep our faith hidden (vv:26-27); better for us to proclaim what we know on our terms than have to defend ourselves against our opponents' cross examination. People might not want to listen and we might be afraid of the consequences of them hearing, but it's better to take the initiative and go into the wolf pack. Jesus' reason for our boldness is simple: our opponents can only kill our bodies, they cannot harm our souls if we have put our trust in God.

Finally, in a bold reminder of his authority, Jesus declares that those who remain loyal to him will benefit from his loyalty (v:33). This is not a matter of private faith but public declaration. We cannot be a secret disciple for long: as we live his way, sooner or later we will get asked to explain ourselves and how we respond has eternal consequences.

Jesus sets our experience of opposition in the overall context of his mission – to usher in God's reign of justice and peace. But true peace comes only through following Jesus, and peacemakers often pay a heavy price. Jesus carried a cross and we are called to do the same. But the note of hope here is that if we lose our life in Christ, we will find it in God.

First impressions

- What is about to happen here?
- What aspects of the Gospel message would you want to 'shout from the rooftops'?
- Does fear stop us from sharing our faith? What does God have to say about this?



A prayer of commitment

Jesus, you walked to the cross, and paid the ultimate sacrifice for us, for our freedom. May we walk with you this week, as we learn what it is to truly take up our cross and follow you. May we shout from the rooftops and burn with your love inside us, so that others may see you too. **Amen.**

WATCH



In Matthew's Gospel, we are encouraged to tell in the light what is shared in the dark, to shout it from the rooftops. Watch the video of the song 'Indescribable' by Chris Tomlin. <https://youtu.be/5IIVfkY5q54> Listen carefully to the words; you might like to print them out to follow. Which line of the song – or perhaps just a word or two – particularly speaks to you of the awesomeness of God? What can or do you learn from those words or phrases?