

"How Then, Will We Live?" Part 10: "Who Will We Fear?"

"We have a strong relationship with You because You are strong!" –Mike Hammonds

"I am persuaded that nothing can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord!" **Romans 8.38,39**

How then will we live? With absolute confidence in the One whose opinion of us is the only One that matters!

We can be too easily taken and shaken by other people's opinion's of us! And rather than callously declaring 'I don't care what people think,' let's commend ourselves into the hands of God!

A BIG Problem... "Among the chief rulers many believed on Him but because of the Pharisees they did not confess Him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue (for the Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that He was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue), *for they loved the praise (lit: opinion, estimation, glory) of men more than the praise (opinion, estimation, glory) of God!*" **John 12.42,43 (9.22)**

The desire for the praise and acceptance of men can loom bigger than GOD! Coupled with **Rom10.9-11 1John 4.15** confession, *they were willing to "postpone" their salvation to have their comfort among men!* Maybe they hadn't heard Him earlier... "Whoever will confess Me before men, I will confess before My Father. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will deny before My Father in Heaven! **Mt10.33**

Our realization of Jesus, our very kingdom experience, will be determined by who and what we love, who and what we fear, most!

"There is no fear in true love. True love casts out all fear. He that fears is not made perfect in love!"
1John 4.18

Love speaks... "If any man comes to Me who doesn't hate his father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple..." **Luke 14.26** Some very confusing language from the man of love without explanation... It can sound like cultic isolationism... "cut yourself off, shut them out, love me only..." But hating people is contrary to truth: "*He that says He loves God and hates his brother is a liar!*" **1John 4.20**

**Christian faith doesn't pull you out of the world... It sends you in!
Christian faith doesn't call you to hate... it calls you to true love!
But that love comes with a cross to bear... a possible price to pay!**

"Who plans to build a house, who doesn't sit down and count the cost to be sure there's enough money to finish it? What if you lay the foundation and then you're not able to go any further? Won't people who see it unfinished begin to mock your efforts? **v28-30**

The cost of discipleship... Is not isolation... *but insulation!* It includes the possibility of family and friends rejecting you with your faith! Jesus asks, "will you follow Me without other's approval?" "If you cannot bear this Cross to follow Me you cannot be My disciple! If you have not counted the cost, you may not finish the build, you may not win the battle, the excuse will make you look like a fool, the compromise will make you a captive... if you can't go on without their approval you cannot be My disciple!" **v27-33**

It's a cost that needs to be addressed! Do you need other's approval for the life you've been called to live in Christ? Is that what's going to get in your way? It usually begins with friends! You have new life, perspectives, desires... "No longer living in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but now for the will of God..." **1P4** "Affections set on the things above where, Christ is seated with God, not on things on the earth...because you are now dead and your life is in Christ!" **Col 3.1-3**

They would be happy for you if they understood... but... "the natural man receives not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned!" **1Cor2.14 2Cor 3.14-18** You are a new creature... **2Cor 5.17** "Putting off the old lifestyle, corrupted by lusts... to put on the new..." **Eph 4.22-24** "And they think it's strange that you aren't running with them to the same excess that you once did, *and they begin speaking evil of you!*" **1Peter 4.1-4**

It usually begins with friends! But it can escalate beyond that quickly! "The time is coming when they will lay hands on you for My name's sake... and it will turn into a testimony for you... and you will be betrayed by family and friends and even put to death..." **Lk 21.16** Does that matter more than Christ?

The cost of discipleship... "We who were dead in sins, are called to live unto righteousness..." **1Pet2.24** "It is no longer us, but Christ living in us and giving us the opportunity to live in/by the very same faith..." **Gal 2.20** It's an offer to certain disinterestedness in the things of the world... And that draws certain criticism! Narrow, hard, boring, dim, simple... And if you begin believing those opinions, you will begin to withdraw! But if we love Him, with true love, our love will cast out our fear and we will pay the price to build, to win, and to stand! **Acts**

In Our Search for Acceptance... Must realize approval, security, doesn't come from people, but God! If God is for us it makes no difference who is on the other side of the opinion! **R8.31** People will always have an opinion of us and we can't be fearful of it/them... "You are not greater than Me. If they have called me a devil, what will they say about you? Fear them not which can kill the body but not the soul, but fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell..." **Mt 10.24ff** If the world hates you it's because they hated Me first... **John 15.18 Lk 10.16** People will always have an opinion of us and we can't be fearful of it/them... Some will express it loudly, critically, but we can't let it stop us... "we commanded you not to speak or teach in Jesus name... 'Sorry, but we're speaking the things we know...'" **A4.18ff** "We must obey God rather than man!" **A5.29**

Just before we go... Need to flip the topic as "a cost of discipleship..." "Seek not to become too large a character in other's lives!" VOG In the arena of having others attention, affections, acceptance and esteem... "He must increase and I must decrease!" **John 3.30** Seek to love and support... Be a powerful influence, supporter, sponsor, behind the scenes... But don't allow your "disapproval" to be a detrimental force!