

Failure To Launch

Text : **Matthew 10: 24-36 , 21-22**

INTRODUCTION :

A. Our military has been creative in their recruiting techniques.

1. My Uncle Harding saw a Navy poster saying, “*Join the Navy and see the world.*”
 - a. He thought that was a good way to get off the farm so he joined.
 - b. He was shelled in 5 of the 7 seas, but seldom got on deck and never got ashore.
 - c. His ship was sunk and he spent almost a week in the water before being rescued.
2. A generation later my brother-in-law fell for the same sales pitch.
 - a. His submarine submerged as it left the port and stayed submerged until it returned.
 - b. One trip they set a world record for longest time submerged ... 10 months.
 - c. When Bill got home from that record setting mission his wife was 6 mo. pregnant.
3. My sister’s husband joined the army to “*Be all that you can be.*”
 - a. The recruiter promised to train him in the latest technology.
 - b. Terry spent 3 years as a gunner in a tank and came out hard of hearing.
 - c. “This is what we need you to do so this is *what you can be* in this man’s army. ”

B. Jesus doesn’t use gimmicks or unfulfilled promises to recruit for His army.

1. I was treated badly and then killed.
You can expect the same treatment.
2. I spent my life calling rebellious people to be reconciled to the Father.
You must do likewise.
3. Because I humbled Myself to obey the Father, He has exalted Me. (**Phil 2: 1-11**)
You will be given an exalted position if you humble yourself as an obedient servant.

C. Since we all know the terms and all have volunteered to serve God as disciples of His Christ, there should be no hesitation to serve Him as He instructs.

1. A “disciple” { *mathetes* } is defined as : A pupil, A Learner, An apprentice
2. The work of the disciple is made clear in advance.
 - a. Be active representatives of Christ (God) on the earth. (**Matt. 10: 32, II Cor. 5**)
 - b. Exemplify the character of God (Christ) on the earth. (**Matt. 5: 16, I Tim. 4: 12**)
 - c. Do good to others in the name of the Lord. (**Gal. 6: 6-10, I Tim. 6: 18, Heb. 13:16**)

3. Discipleship is not an exalted position. Jesus made it clear that the reward He was offering to His disciples was NOT in this life.
 - a. **II Tim. 4: 7-8** I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; **8** in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing.
 - b. **Col. 1: 5** – because of the hope laid up for you in Heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel
 - c. **I Pet. 1: 4** – to obtain an inheritance *which is imperishable and undefiled* and will not fade away, reserved in Heaven for you,

With God having made it so clear, why do we have so many who take the name of Christ, but never progress into active service to Him? (*stillborn child*) They are like rockets that never got off the launching pad. (*maintenance heavy*)

I. Is it that they do not understand what it means to confess Christ before men ?

A. “Confession” is not a difficult concept to grasp.

1. Definition : { *homologeo* } to profess. ; to declare openly, speak out freely. (*Strong's*)
2. Compound Word : *homo* – same, unified, one + *logeo* – word = to say the same word

B. Confession is something that is done openly before other people.

1. Before unbelievers : (*There's no such thing as a secret Christian.*)
 - a. **John 12: 42-43** Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; **43** for they loved praise from men more than praise from God. (cf- **9:22**)
 - b. Could it be that some believers today who don't confess Him for the same reason ?
2. Before believers :
 - a. **I Tim. 6: 12** – Fight the good fight of faith; take hold of the eternal life to which you were called, and you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
 - b. In spite of the common interpretation, this verse does not necessitate that the witnesses were believers, just that it be before many people, i.e., public.
3. THEREFORE, *By these verses we see that* :
 - a. It is understood that confession of Christ may adversely affect one's social status.
 - b. Confession is linked to fighting the good fight.
 - c. Confession of Christ is linked to eternal life.

C. Confession is not only public, it is verbal. ... NOT just a good example.

1. **Rom. 10: 8-10** But what does it say? “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart”—that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, **9** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; **10** for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.
2. Confession is directly linked to salvation, but it’s not the only thing that is so linked.
 - a. E.g., **Matt 7: 21** not all who confess Him will be saved, but all who **do** His will.
 - b. The bible isn’t a buffet meal where readers get to choose their favorite commands. **Psa. 119: 160** – The sum of Your word is truth, And every one of Your righteous ordinances is everlasting.
 - c. We don’t have the truth until we have everything God says about a subject. Once we have the truth must obey it, i.e., everything God says about every subject.

D. Confession is not a onetime ceremonial response to a question. (cf – Acts 8:37)

1. Each time we share the gospel we confess Christ to the world.
2. All are commanded to go confess the gospel to all the world. (**Mt 28:19, Mk 16:16**)
3. These are all continuous action verbs.

II. Since we understand what confession is and that it’s essential, why don’t we do it?

A. Some do not have a relationship with Christ that compels them to tell others.

1. They do not have the “**fire**” in their bones.
Jer. 20: 9 – But if I say, “I will not remember Him Or speak anymore in His name,”
Then in my heart it becomes like a burning fire Shut up in my bones;
And I am weary of holding it in, And I cannot endure it.
2. Those who are in love with the Lord, cannot keep their love secret. (*threatened*)
Acts 4: 20 – “ ... we cannot stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.”
3. Having been with Jesus changed the disciples and it will change us as well.
 - a. When Jesus was arrested, they ran. **Matt. 26: 56b**
 - b. After the crucifixion, the disciples hid behind locked doors. **John 20: 19**
 - c. When they knew He was risen and ascended, they became bold.
Acts 4: 13 – Now as they observed the confidence of Peter and John and understood that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed, and began to recognize them as having been with Jesus.

* When we are walking with Jesus we will also be emboldened to speak for Him.

B. Some fear the ridicule or scorn of men.

1. It is easy to fall into the same trap which ensnared those Pharisees. (**John 12: 42**)
2. Why be intimidated ? The gospel is not supposed to appeal to the wisdom of men.
 - a. **I Cor. 1: 18** – For the word of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
 - b. **I Cor. 2: 12–14** Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God, **13** which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. **14** But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him; and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised.
3. **I Cor. 2: 1, 4–5** And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. **4** My message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, **5** so that your faith would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God. (*Don't be intimidated ... I Pet. 3: 14-15*)

* **Note** : Fear when speaking before others is normal, but the Christian does not let that fear silence him.

I Cor. 2: 3 – I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling, ...

Jesus expects us to respond to fear the same way He did in the garden.

(**Luke 22**) Though in great fear He endured the shame and the pain for us.

* *John Wayne defined courage as “saddling up even though you’re scared to death”.*

Jesus encouraged ... All they can do is kill the body and I’ll raise it back up

All Christians should develop the courage of Hugh Ladimer (note at appendix)

C. Some do not have a deep conviction about Heaven and Hell.

1. There is a difference between academic knowledge and conviction.
2. No Christian can believe in Hell and set idly by while their loved ones go there.
 - a. The sovereign God of the universe does not lie. (*If He did – pitch the bible.*)
II Thes. 1: 7-10 ... when the Lord Jesus will be revealed from Heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, **8** dealing out retribution to those who do not know God and to those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. **9** These will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, **10** when He comes to be glorified in His saints on that day, ...
 - b. He has promised both Heaven and Hell; ... He must do as He promised.

D. Some do not confess Christ before men because they do not realize the power of the gospel message to change lives.

1. **Rom. 1: 16** – For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, ... (*dunamis = root of dynamite*)
2. The gospel has the power to create faith which in turn changes men's lives.
Rom. 10: 17 – So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.
 - a. No one can be saved without faith in Jesus as the Son of God.
John 8: 24 – Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”
 - b. Jesus is the only key to the door of Heaven. (**John 14:6**)
3. God has entrusted His saving message to Christians.
 - a. Men are dying of terminal sin and we must carry the cure to them.
 - b. **II Cor. 4: 5-7** For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake. **6** For God, who said, “Light shall shine out of darkness,” is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ. **7** But we have this treasure in earthen vessels, so that the surpassing greatness of the power will be of God and not from ourselves;

III. All who don't confess Christ are enemies of God.

A. Jesus allowed for no middle ground.

1. Jesus clearly stated that every person must make a choice ... **For Him or against.**
Luke 11: 23 – He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me, scatters.
2. One who attempts to remain neutral and not make a choice has chosen **against** Him.
3. **Our text Vs. 32-33** : Those who don't confess Him before men are denying Him.

B. Jesus declares that there are NO inactive members of the kingdom of God.

1. **Luke 9: 23** – And He was saying to them all, “If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”
2. **Luke 14: 27** – Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me Cannot be My disciple.
 - a. Those who don't carry the cross as Jesus did **cannot be** His disciples.
 - b. They are not considered delinquent or inactive ... **Jesus says** they are not His.
 - c. The service Jesus wants is the same daily activity that consumed His life. **Lk 19:10**

C. Jesus is totally committed to one singular outcome ... the saving of souls.

1. He lived for it and He died for it.
2. There was not a “politically correct” bone in Jesus’ body.
 - a. He had no difficulty telling people they needed to repent.
 - b. He called sin sin and identified sinners as sinners. (*You’re like whitewashed tombs.*)
3. Many today would rather see a friend spend eternity in Hell than risk an offense.
 - a. When we come to know the fear of the Lord we will persuade men. (**II Cor 5:11**)
 - b. When the sorrow we bring produces repentance, we can rejoice. (**II Cor 7:8-11**)

*** * We all need the courage and commitment of Peter Cartwright :**

In a bygone era a Methodist preacher named Peter Cartwright, was told by deacons before one of his sermons that President Andrew Jackson was in the congregation. “I understand that president Andrew Jackson is here”. Cartwright began, “I have been requested to be guarded in my remarks. Andrew Jackson will go to hell if he doesn’t repent”.

Rather than be offended, Jackson later told Cartwright, “Sir, if I had a regiment of men like you, I could whip the world.”

CONCLUSION :

A. I urge each one of us to develop the courage and the commitment to confess Christ daily as we go about in this world.

B. Satan will do his best to dissuade us from doing so. He will tell us :

1. You can’t do it. (**Phil. 4: 13** ... **can do all things** ...)
2. You have too many responsibilities. (**Matt. 19: sell all you have and** ...)
3. I must take care of family responsibilities first. (**Luke 9: 59-60 let the dead bury**)
4. I’m too old ... It’s too embarrassing ... It’s not my job ... My life is my confession

C. God has appointed a day in which He will judge the world. (**Acts 17:30-31)**

1. On that day we will be relying on Jesus to proclaim our name to the Father.
2. If we are daily proclaiming His name, He will gladly proclaim our name.

INVITATION :

Today is the day for you to proclaim the name of Jesus before this assembly.

Lesson Text :**Matthew 10: 24-33**

24 A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master. **25** It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more *will they malign* the members of his household!

26 “Therefore do not fear them, for there is nothing concealed that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. **27** What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear *whispered* in *your* ear, proclaim upon the housetops. **28** Do not fear those who kill the body but are unable to kill the soul; but rather fear Him who is able to destroy both soul and body in hell. **29** Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. **30** But the very hairs of your head are all numbered. **31** So do not fear; you are more valuable than many sparrows.

32 Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. **33** But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven.

Matthew 10: 21-22

21 Brother will betray brother to death, and a father *his* child; and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death. **22** You will be hated by all because of My name, but it is the one who has endured to the end who will be saved.

Appendix:

Hugh Latimer Before Henry the 8th

Hugh Latimer was the son of an English farmer, educated at Cambridge University, and ordained as a Roman Catholic priest in 1510. ... Though reputed as a preacher prior to his conversion to Christ in 1525, after contact with Thomas Bilney-- another Cambridge scholar who had come to accept the preeminence of the Scriptures over the preeminence of the Pope ... It is said that Henry VIII called Hugh Latimer to preach before his court. With the courage of a lion and the plainest language, Hugh Latimer faithfully denounced the king and his courtiers, like John the Baptist before King Herod. "For John said unto [Herod], It is not lawful for thee to have her" (Matthew 14:4). Enraged, the king demanded that Latimer retract his denunciations upon the next Lord's Day.

Entering the pulpit, Latimer announced the same text. Then he paused and said:

"Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the King's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest; therefore take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease! And then consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence comest thou; upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God! Who is all present! and Who beholdeth all thy ways! and Who is able to cast thy soul into hell! Therefore take care that thou deliverest thy message faithfully."

Then, to the amazement of all the court, Latimer renewed his preaching with even greater zeal and strength. "O Earth, Earth, Earth, hear the Word of the LORD" (Jeremiah 22:29). All present were certain that Henry would have Hugh Latimer beheaded; but, the king, subdued by Latimer's earnestness, exclaimed, "Blessed be God, I have so honest a servant!" And, though Henry VIII is still identified with the debauchery and treachery, he was instrumental in divorcing the influence of the Church of Rome over what would become Protestant England.

-- Edited excerpt from internet article by Tom Stewart