



Matthew 10:37-42

Jesus said to his apostles: "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple--truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

Introductory Prayer: Lord, I wish to put aside all distractions and to give you my total focus. I will do nothing more important today than to meditate prayerfully on your goodness and your active role in my life. Though I am unworthy to be in your presence, I trust in your mercy and love. Through this moment of prayer I want to draw closer to you and learn to live more like you.

Petition: Lord, grant me a heart that is truly worthy of your presence.

1. Those Lose Their Life for My Sake Will Find It: The choice Christ offers is clear and stark. There is no middle ground. It is life or death for us. Moses was just as clear to the Israelites: "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse; therefore choose life, that you and your descendants may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice, and cleaving to him; for that means life to you and length of days, that you may dwell in the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them" (Deuteronomy 30:19-20). Is my greatest concern to gain the kind of life Christ is talking about, eternal life, for myself and those I love? Can I truly say I'm choosing life by cleaving to him above all else?

2. Giving Without Setting Conditions: Life with Christ demands a total surrender that is not nuanced with conditions, human calculations or personal preferences. Many have determined that they are giving enough to God, but they

are still empty of him. They give, but *they* are not given. They only cheat themselves of a living experience of Christ and a love for his kingdom that would fill their heart and strengthen their spirit. I must labor never to let my decision for Christ decay into self-serving postures.

3. "...Is Not Worthy of Me": Just as the High Priest of the Old Covenant could enter the Holy of Holies in the Temple only with the blood of sacrifice sprinkled before him, we are worthy to enter the divine presence only with sacrifice: Christ's. When the soldier withdrew his lance from Christ's side, the unstoppable fire of Christ's charity broke forth, and the deflated heart of Our Lord taught a lesson that the world had never seen: the heart of a Christian is preserved by giving itself away; it is expanded when it has been completely emptied. Christ wants to enter into our heart, yet nothing makes us more worthy of him than our conscious effort to accept pains and sufferings for love of him. Self-denial, detachment, taking the harder path... these will not destroy us; they will vivify us.

Conversation with Christ: Lord, I know that my disordered passions and weaknesses lead me away from you. Help me to re-order my life. With your Sacred Heart as my light, I know I need not fear the loss of anything on this earth as long as I have preserved you in my life and mission.

Resolution: I will offer a special sacrifice in an area where I am often too indulgent.