

Introducing a theme... "Your exordinary life, Christian" (5 minutes up front)



"Exordinary" sounds a bit strange, I know. But "extraordinary," which someone might suggest otherwise, doesn't quite capture everything we want to cover. Let me explain: "ex-" from the Greek (εκ) and then also Latin (ex) preposition means: "out of." You, Christian, have an "out of the ordinary"/ exordinary life. Think of that!

In some ways, that description is reflective of how you'll be seen as strange - your choices in life foreign - to others who live for what they have in this life only.

- Philippians 3 explains ¹⁸ "...many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. ¹⁹ ...their god is their stomach... Their mind is set on earthly things."
- 1 Peter 4:2-4 goes on to explain "they think it strange that you don't plunge with them into the same flood of reckless living."

You see, they don't know God's love in Jesus. They follow human wisdom, and human desires. You know God's truth and love, and live for Him (in trust and with thanks). Those are two totally different world views for life.

That will mean added pressure sometimes for you, Christian, or even "abuse" from people who don't know God and His love and His truth. (That's #1 insight.)

But – I want you to see this (a #2 insight). In other instances, the "out of the ordinary" life you have – the peace or joy that you have in Christ, or love that you show to others – draws positive attention from onlookers (Matt. 5:13-16).

And that points us, along with them, back to the foundation for all of this (a 3rd insight): the totally different view of life for you, Christian, flows from the change of heart that the Lord has brought in you.

- 1 Peter 2:9 ...proclaim the praises of him who called you **out of** – *out of* - darkness into his marvelous light.

You are no longer in the darkness of the "way that seems right to man but in the end leads to death." You know the impossibility of pursuing God by your efforts, that trying to be righteous/good enough (Romans 9:32-10:4) to earn God's favor will never work. You trust Jesus is the Way, the only Way, your righteousness – Savior. You are no longer on the broad road that leads to destruction.

This, though absolute truth, will be met with challenge: "we preach Christ Crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Gentiles... but to [you] whom God has called: Christ, the power of God & wisdom of God" (1 Cor.1:22-25).

Pull all these insights together. **Your out of the ordinary life, Christian**, will mean unique – and sometimes very difficult – challenges. But "our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18).

This, my friends, is an important topic for us to talk about. Let's be encouraged by the reality of... **"Your EXordinary life, Christian."**

And like God's people of old, let's raise shouts of thanks:

- Psalm 107:14-15... "He brought them [and us] **out of** darkness and the deepest gloom and broke away their [our] chains. Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men."

Matthew 10:34-39



As we dig in to Matthew 10, vs.34-39, we've got our first topic in our series "Your *out of the ordinary* life, Christian." That topic is ... **God above all**. And what comes with that? ...**a sword & divide, and a daily crucify**.

Can you remember those? ...a sword & divide, and a daily crucify. Does that sound shocking? Let's dig in and get comfort, and also be encouraged to love God above all.

(Prayer:) This is your Word here, Lord. Help us to hear, learn and take to heart all the truth you impart to us here. Amen.

Look around, and you'll see it here in our great state of North Carolina. I'm talking about the "House Divided" message [[click picture](#)]. I've seen it riding on vehicles and hanging from homes. You've probably seen this too, right? There's the UNC/Duke variety. That's a big one. I've also seen NC State/UNC.

It makes me think of another divide from back where my family lived before here. I remember being asked "Red or Green?" at my first official Sunday there in New Mexico. Have I shared this with all of you before? Who knows -(my family can't answer) -: what is this 'red or green' question in NM all about? Red or green chiles, of course. Name which one you prefer. Come on back to the state of North Carolina and we've got our own divide when it comes to local culinary flare, right? The West tends to go Tomato Based from what I understand. The East favors Vinegar. And I'm talking about? BBQ.

There are divides all over life. The deeper question to answer is: What's the issue about, on which we differ? The teams we cheer for. The type of flavors we like best. Whether it's with family, or among friends, or around town – in most cases, examples like those provide a little good natured banter and rivalry. Sometimes that gets a little intense. But there isn't necessarily any hostility.

Although there have been times things go sour. For example, football season is big in Columbus OH. One year while I was growing up there, Wisconsin came into the Horseshoe (Ohio State's stadium) and upset our Buckeyes. Our church's vicar that year was from WI, with a license plate on his vehicle to match. Well, he found his tires with all the air let out of them after that game. There's of course been worse done over sport's rivalries. Such divides aren't always marked by hostility. But sometimes – from some individuals – there's aggression.

[click up "God above all: a sword & divide, and a daily crucify] Well, if you remember back to Jesus' words in Matthew ch.10, this concept of a "Divide" – even within families – is one of the key thoughts.

I've got 3 takeaways for us to focus in on here.

#1. *There is a divide in our world*, and you and I are on one side of it. And sometimes people from within our families are on the other side of it. This doesn't mean there is always aggression or hostility. But such hostility is present, is a reality, in our world. **Read vs.34-36**.

Jesus talks about *a divide* and he talks about *a sword*. Think about it. With God's Word at work, by God's power and grace, people are cut away from the dark prison of unbelief and the chains of sin that held them. They are brought into the Light – to stand in God's grace. They – we! – are no longer divided from our God. We have peace with Him through our Lord Jesus Christ.

This is wonderful! And so we carry this truth with us. It is what we hold dear. But sometimes it is met with hostility.

You may, for example, have someone – it may be a family member – who tells you, “It’s not good enough to say you still love me and say that I’m wrong. You’ve got to give your acceptance & approval for what is in my life too” (whether that’s a belief or a behavior that is against God).

There’s a reason Jesus warns us: ³⁷ “*Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.*”

As we talk about this topic, then, of love God above all... here’s the #2 take away I want you to focus in on:

2. What makes one ‘worthy’?

That’s a question to which we should really nail down the answer, as we hear Jesus talking about ‘worthy’ here.

First, it is important to see: ‘worthy’ doesn’t have to do with *how well you do* at anything. It’s not based on your performance in any way. Jesus’ descriptions here have everything to do with the question: in whom do you trust? Jesus is really hitting at the point: who is your God? Is it others, or is it the Lord? Trust in Him, The Lord! There is nothing in Jesus’ words that would indicate that your relationship with Him is based on *how well you do* at putting Him first. No. He is simply pointing to the heart. The issue is: In whom do you trust? Who is your God?

And with that, there is one more issue Jesus’ leads us to address as we answer, “Who is your God?” Along with the issue “Is it others, or the Lord,” there is also the issue:

Is it self, or is it the Lord?

You see, here is where the “daily crucify” of our key truth comes in. We’ve talked already about the divide in our world, and how you and I have been brought out of the darkness of unbelief and into God’s wonderful light. Now we have in front of us another truth to take to heart.

3. There is an internal divide within each of us still. And the difficulty of what we face because of this is brought out in **Vs.38-39. Read them.**

The cross we carry includes the daily effort to crucify the sinful flesh. We are to set out each day to destroy entirely the sinful self – to put to death its pull and sway upon us. Then, be ready to do it all again the next day.

And with that in view, circle back to “What makes one worthy” and see with me: this is why Jesus means so much to you and me. If ‘worthy’ was in any way dependent on how well you or I’ve done, where would we be? “Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.” (Mt 10:37) Think of how often you’ve failed to deny self, seeking your own desires rather than placing God above all else.

All you or I have to do is think about the many times we’ve focused on our desires, our way, rather than God’s will. And again, you and I are back to the truth: Jesus means everything for us.

Jesus took up THE ONLY cross to bring our salvation. He paid everything – in full - for your sins and my sins along with their punishment to be removed from us. We stand forgiven. We have peace with God through faith in Him. This is our comfort. This is our reason and source of strength to love God above all. This is all part of... your *out of the* ordinary life, Christian. And this gives us reason to rejoice and thank God. Amen.