

Bible Study Guide: Week of 6-22-2020

1. Read through the passage below
2. Read my notes and commentary
3. Read the questions at the end and ponder or discuss with others

Pastor Andrew

Matthew 10:40-42

40 "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41 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; 42 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."

40 "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.

In this passage Jesus is continuing his instructions to his apostles—the twelve disciples whom he sent out to share the message about the Kingdom of Heaven with the “lost sheep of Israel.” Remember, up to this point he has warned them that they will experience rejection and hardship, that they are being sent out “like sheep among wolves,” that they will be hated by family members and kicked out of their communities because of following Jesus, and that they were to take up their crosses and follow Jesus.

Here, Jesus assures them that they will indeed be welcomed by some of the ones whom Jesus will send them to visit. After all, why would Jesus send them if they were only to experience wholesale rejection? Some will hear the message the disciples come to bring and Jesus reminds the disciples that those who welcome the disciples are, ultimately, accepting Jesus himself and, by extension, the Father who sent Jesus.

We in the church often read these words about welcome as if we ourselves are to be the ones who welcome others. Indeed, we see that call elsewhere in scripture. Here, however, the tables are turned. It is the disciples who are the ones to be welcomed by those in the world.

41 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;

The phrase “in the name of” means “for the sake of” or “on account of”—we might say, “whoever welcomes a prophet because that person is a prophet” or “whoever welcomes a righteous person because that person is righteous.” It is a way of saying that Jesus’ disciples may expect to find a welcome among some because of who they say they are—emissaries of Jesus.

The reference to “a prophet’s reward” is deeply ironic here, as the prophets were often rejected and persecuted in their own context. On a basic level, though, Jesus’ point here seems to be that those who receive Jesus’ apostles will be blessed by the presence of the Kingdom coming into their midst.

42 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."

Once again, Christians often read this passage assuming that we are the ones who are to give cold water to others. Indeed, we are called to care for others and help them, but here the disciples (particularly the apostles; those sent by Jesus) are the ones who are on the receiving end of water given to them by another person who is not a disciple. Jesus promises a reward to those who offer hospitality and welcome to the apostles.

The term "little ones" is often used to refer to children, but here Matthew uses it to emphasize the humility and vulnerability of the apostles. Just as elsewhere Jesus says his apostles/disciples are those of "little faith," the implication is that Jesus' followers are woefully unprepared for their work, at least by their own strength and merits. It is only as God leads and guides them that they are able to go out into the world to share the gospel.

Discussion/Reflection Questions:

- 1. Jesus says, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." Wherever you go, do you think of yourself as carrying Jesus and God the Father with you? If not, how might your life change if you began to think of yourself as a bearer of Christ to others?**
- 2. Can you think of a time when someone who was not a Christian (or someone you were not sure was a Christian) showed particular kindness to you?**
- 3. How are we, as Jesus' modern disciples, to live out the call not only to give a welcome to others, but to receive a welcome from others? How does it change our mission and ministry to think about our task not just as welcoming others into the church, but as being welcomed by others in the world?**