



JUDGING JESUS

Matthew 10-12

Study Guide



THE COST OF DISCIPLESHIP

Welcome to our new series, Judging Jesus. In the leadup to Christmas, we're going to be looking at Matthew 10-12 where we'll see various people pass their judgement on Jesus. Unbeknownst to them, is that in actual fact, Jesus himself is judge – the judge of the living and the dead and how you respond to him really matters.

We're going to start at Matthew 10 which begins a new section in Matthew's gospel. Jesus has begun his public ministry with its focus on healings, miracles and the announcement of the Kingdom of God, but he now turns to his disciples as an extension of his ministry.

Jesus' description of the cost of discipleship will give us a sharp dose of reality for what it looks like to follow Him.



Read Matthew 10:1-15

1. What are the instructions given to the 12 disciples? Do you think these are direct instructions that we can also take up as disciples?

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2. What kind of responses should the disciples expect?

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In this chapter, the twelve disciples were given a special commission to extend Jesus' earthly ministry. We don't easily just take up the command to heal the sick and raise the dead. In chapter 28, Jesus extends the mission beyond the house of Israel to the world in what is commonly known as The Great Commission where all Christians are to take on the task of spreading the good news of the gospel. But even if our mission looks different to what it does here in chapter 10, we still get a picture of what discipleship of Jesus looks like.



Read Matthew 10:16-25

3. What are the disciples to be prepared for?

4. Of all the types of persecutions that Jesus mentions, what would you be most fearful of?

5. At this point, Jesus hasn't yet been crucified. But to what extent is Jesus also describing what will happen to him?

6. What should a disciple do in the face of such persecution?

Jesus gives a stark picture of what discipleship will look like. This is not a task for the fainthearted. It will test where your allegiance lies. It has the potential to split families (see also 10:34-37), set you on a path against governments and facing persecution at every turn. Some of us at Christ Central have experienced how following Jesus sets them at odds with their own family. But with that comes the promise that there is salvation at the end (10:22).

Read Matthew 10:26-33

7. What is to be the basis of the disciples' confidence?

The fraught path of the disciple of Jesus will test our resolve but the astounding thing is that we can proceed without fear! Jesus as Lord and Judge means which side you take is crucial. Siding with Jesus will not be easy, but you will be siding with the one who has power over the eternal destiny of souls.

In many ways, what Jesus has been talking about is encapsulated in Matthew 10:38-39:

*³⁸ And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
³⁹ Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*

Jesus' vision for discipleship is radical. It will cost you everything. Yet because you gain Jesus, you gain everything. Perhaps this is behind why Jesus calls his disciples 'little ones' (v42) and the wise and powerful and rich will have such a hard time turning to Jesus. John Stott once wrote:

'Life through death is one of the profoundest paradoxes in both the Christian faith and the Christian life ... The radical biblical perspective is to see death not as the termination of life but as the gateway to life.'

8. What have you found challenging about Jesus' description of discipleship?

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9. Jesus speaks of great sacrifice in the journey following him. What are some things that you need to learn to hold more loosely in order to take up your cross?

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10. How can we help each other to persevere when the cost seems too great?

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EXPECTATIONS OF THE JUDGE

Can you think an experience where your expectations didn't quite match the reality (either positively or negatively)? Perhaps a movie, holiday accommodation or a restaurant?

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After Jesus spent time explaining the costs of discipleship in Chapter 10, he now turns to the crowds in the cities and how their expectations of him affect their response to him.



Read Matthew 11:1-6

John the Baptist has been imprisoned since Matthew 4:12. It appears that John has been tracking Jesus' progress!

1. Who do you think John has been expecting Jesus to be? Go back and read Matthew 3:11-12. Do you think John has his doubts?

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John certainly saw himself as the one who prepared the way for the Messiah. But perhaps John was expecting more 'fireworks' – a spirit anointed Judge who would bring judgement and cleansing. No doubt John would have heard about Jesus' healing and preaching ministry. Jesus' reply quotes Isaiah 35:5-6 and 61:1-2. Read them together as a group.

2. What is Jesus suggesting to John? Do you think John needs his expectations adjusted?

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 **Read Matthew 11:7-15**

The crowds brought John's unmet expectations to Jesus. But now, Jesus turns the tables and asks the crowds – what did you expect of John?

3. What did the crowds see of John?

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John's identity as prophet and messenger to open the way for Jesus directly impacts what they will expect of Jesus and his ministry.

4. How does Jesus affirm John's role?

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5. Why is it important to accept John's testimony?

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John certainly gave prophetic testimony to the greatness of Jesus. However, not all accepted his testimony, and not all accepted Jesus either.

6. What reasons do people give today for rejecting Jesus?

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 **Read Matthew 11:16-19**

7. What is the attitude of the crowds toward John and Jesus?

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What we see of our society's rejection of Jesus is not really all that different to how Jesus was treated during his own lifetime! People often prejudge who they think Jesus is and it can seem like Jesus is singing a tune and everyone is refusing the dance! Jesus did many great things in many cities, but some of them rejected him outright (11:20). For those cities, there can be no pardon from the judgement to come.

However, Jesus does describe the person who does accept who he is. It is the one who does not come with any expectations but nonetheless, finds their rest and comfort in him.

 **Read Matthew 11:25-30.**

8. Describe in your own words the right way to accept Jesus.

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9. What does it mean that Jesus' burden is light? What does it mean to find rest for your souls? (v28-30)

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For all the high expectations of John and the scorn of much of the crowd and cities, knowing the real Jesus means approaching him as a child.

10. How would you explain what it means to trust Jesus to a friend who may be a bit sceptical?

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11. Does your relationship with Jesus feel like rest for your soul?

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 **Pray**



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