

## Lucy and the Professor

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Matthew 10:32-33

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In the book *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*, young Lucy is the first to enter the land of Narnia. When she returns, though, getting her brothers and sister to believe what she has seen and experienced proved to be quite difficult.

(Watch Chapter 7 of this movie)

Although none but Professor Kirke would believe, Lucy sticks to her story even when her own family begins to question her sanity. A problem not unlike what you and I face when we try to tell others about the things we have experienced in Christ Jesus.

So Christ has spoken to you about doing the work He began. He has called you to go and tell others about His message. An amazing transformation begins when you realize that Jesus looks at you as the one who can give this world the answer it has been looking for. And so, with timid hands and nervous lips, we take those first steps of service; telling others about what we have seen and heard.

We begin with such enthusiasm. Christ has revealed Himself to us in an amazing way. He not only has walked with us as we've learned to trust and obey, but He has then called us to be the instrument through which He works. We can hardly wait to serve, to love and care; to listen and tell. We begin to imagine the lives that will be changed because we've lifted a hand. But then something happens. We start doing and telling only to find many people who refuse to even listen to what we have to say about Jesus. We meet individuals who have bizarre opinions about Jesus; people who will tell us that what we believe is wrong; that Jesus is not real and that we have been deceived. This kind of reception to our enthusiasm can be quite discouraging.

In Matthew 10 Jesus says, "Listen, it's going to be quite nasty out there. When you start living as one of My followers and when you start telling people about Me, the world will fight back. Government officials will tell you that it's against the law to talk about Me. Your own family will not like the fact that you have become a Christian. And all of this will happen because of what they have first done to Me.

You need to know that since this is the way they treated Me this is the way they will treat you. But do not be discouraged. If you will listen closely, God will give you the words to say. When they threaten and accuse you, God will give you His power during these incredible opportunities to show them what a difference I made in your life. Remember that you are special to both Me and My Father. Through all that you endure, you will not be abandoned. They may crush your body, but do not let them crush your spirit” (My Paraphrase of Matthew 10:16-31).

It appears Jesus knew what we would be up against. He knew what we would face as His witnesses to this world. We try to show His love to others. We reach out to care for the ones the world has cast aside. We try to live our lives in such a way that others can see Jesus in us. And we do this because we genuinely care about people’s eternal souls. But what do we get in return? We are called hypocrites, idiots, and weirdoes. We are told that only a weakling needs Jesus. We are told what we may say about Jesus, where to say it, and when. Neither our classmates nor our coworkers rejoice when we accept Jesus as our Lord (unless they are believers themselves). In other countries just telling others about Jesus can lead to death.

In response to this, Jesus reminds His followers that <sup>32</sup>“Everyone who acknowledges me publicly here on earth, I will also acknowledge before my Father in heaven. <sup>33</sup>But everyone who denies me here on earth, I will also deny before my Father in heaven.” <sup>1</sup> (Matthew 10:32-33). Now Jesus is not just talking about the unbelieving people of this world. What Jesus meant here is far more complex than that. He is also talking about believers doing what Peter did the night they arrested Jesus (where he said “I don’t know the man”, Matthew 26:74).

If we look at these two verses in the context they were spoken, Jesus was addressing His Apostles just before they were to go out and tell others about the coming of the Christ. This call to confess Jesus publicly here on earth is an admonition to those who already believe; those who would call themselves followers of Christ. And this decree from Jesus **does** need to be said, especially in light of the persecution and ridicule an outspoken believer will receive. The temptation is to remain silent to preserve dignity or life. But Christ does not want us to keep it

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<sup>1</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.

secret and keep it safe. There is no way around it, we are to openly proclaim Jesus in all that we do and say. It is the stewardship He has entrusted into our care.

Some Christians, though, will keep their faith to themselves. Unlike little Lucy, they refuse to talk about what they have seen and heard because of pressure from their family and friends, or out of fear from not knowing what to say. And there are some who believe they have found a way to keep Jesus from causing so much trouble.

Just as damaging as remaining silent are those who try to create a more tolerable Jesus, one with a toned down message that is easier to accept. A Jesus who the world can tolerate, who fits in with all the other gods, who says and does like all the rest is not the Jesus of the Bible. It is a Jesus who stands in stark contrast to this world that divides.

It is a temptation for those of us who serve to either play it safe by remaining silent or to soften some of the blow. It's far easier and so much more popular to stand and talk about a Jesus who is just waiting to bless you and give you all that your heart desires than it is to let the words of Jesus cut sharp and deep into our hearts. But what does Christ have to say about Himself? <sup>34</sup> "Don't imagine that I came to bring peace to the earth! I came not to bring peace, but a sword. <sup>35</sup> 'I have come to set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. <sup>36</sup> Your enemies will be right in your own household!' <sup>2</sup> (Matthew 10:35-36).

I know it can be discouraging when the people of this world don't care at all about what Jesus has to say or when they think we're some kind of idiot for believing all this Christian nonsense. But the truth is that Jesus said if we deny Him on earth He will deny us in Heaven. And out of respect for who He is and what He has said, I'm not going to try and soften the blow or harshness of these words. We certainly don't need one more person trying to explain Jesus; we just need more people to let Jesus be who He is.

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<sup>2</sup>Tyndale House Publishers. (2004). *Holy Bible : New Living Translation*. Wheaton, Ill.