

**SERMON: DIOCESE OF BUNBURY: GEOFF CHADWICK: 21 JUNE 2026:
OS 12a SUNDAY BEWTEEN 19 AND 25 JUNE
SUFFERING**

Matthew 10.24-39

*[Jesus said] ²⁴ 'A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master;
²⁵ it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If
they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign
those of his household!
²⁶ 'So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and
nothing secret that will not become known.
²⁷ What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered,
proclaim from the housetops.
²⁸ Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who
can destroy both soul and body in hell.
²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground
unperceived by your Father.
³⁰ And even the hairs of your head are all counted.
³¹ So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.
³² 'Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge
before my Father in heaven;
³³ but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.
³⁴ 'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring
peace, but a sword.
³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;
³⁶ and one's foes will be members of one's own household.
³⁷ 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;
³⁸ and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me.
³⁹ Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will
find it.*

Today's Gospel reading consists of a number of Jesus's well remembered sayings lumped together. At first it appears that there is no consistent theme although the Scholars Albright and Mann have suggested they form a section called *The Cost of Discipleship* (See Albright WF & Mann CS, 1971, *Matthew*, The Anchor Bible, Double Day, New York, p129). They suggest that the experience of the first early Christians mirrored the life of Jesus. That is, they sufferer for their beliefs just as he did. Whilst not necessarily crucified literally (although some were) they knew betrayal, suffering and despair as Jesus.

Interestingly, Paul picks up this same theme in today's Romans reading:

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. ⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be destroyed, and we might no longer be enslaved to sin. ⁷ For whoever has died is freed from sin. ⁸ But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. (Rom 6:5, NRSV)

This might sound all a bit theoretical, but let me put it to you like this:

Have you ever been persecuted for your faith?

Now fortunately we are safer than in many places in the world-yet there are costs to our discipleship. For example:

- Being scoffed at for having certain ethical principles based on our Christian faith.
- Being caught between attending worship and a family function on a Sunday morning where it was though that “everyone will be available.”
- Refusing to listen to certain types of music.
- Refusing to watch certain TV programmes.
- Being abused for being one of those “bible bashers” or worst.
- Experiencing the pain of giving a portion of your income to the work of the church.

Maybe you have some examples of your own.

Such is the cost of discipleship.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, that faithful German pastor who was executed by the Nazis for criticizing their evil ways, wrote a book in 1937 with this very title. *The Cost of Discipleship*.

This was not theoretical undertaking. It was written at the very time members of his church were being rounded up for being faithful to the Gospel of Jesus.

He says:

Discipleship means allegiance to the suffering Christ, and it is therefore not at all surprising that Christians should be called upon to suffer.

He also said:

Earthly goods are given to be used, not to be collected.

<https://www.newstartdiscipleship.com/post/dietrich-bonhoeffer-cost-of-discipleship-summary-and-quotes>

What a challenge this is to us hoarding types!

So, getting back to Jesus. He is being realistic about discipleship.

When he says:

³⁴ *'Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.*

³⁵ *For I have come to set a man against his father,
and a daughter against her mother,
and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;*

³⁶ *and one's foes will be members of one's own household. (Mtt10:34-36, NRSV)*

He's not saying that families should be fighting one another, but he is saying that there will be times when standing up for one's faith will create tension.

Now I don't think we can leave it there, otherwise we are stuck in our suffering. Whilst it is a reality on our journey of faith, we must remember that it does not have the final say.

Bonhoeffer was correct when he said that *our allegiance is the suffering Christ*. But we also share an allegiance with the risen Christ! For that reminder we only need go to our reading from Paul:

⁹ *We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. ¹⁰ The death he died, he died to sin, once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. ¹¹ So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus. (Rom 6: 9-11, NRSV)*

Jesus too reminds us that we should not fear:

- for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known (Mtt 10:26, NRSV)
- *[you should] rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell. (Mtt 10:28, NRSV)*
- *you are of more value than many sparrows. (Mtt 10:31, NRSV)*

So we should not fear. There is life beyond our sufferings. Although we may not see it at the time, new life will have its way!

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.