

# Opposition to the Gospel

by William MacDonald

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*William MacDonald explores the inevitable opposition and costs associated with accepting the Gospel and following Christ amidst familial and societal pressures.*

**Duration:** 18:42

**Scripture:** Matthew 10:32, 1 Peter 4:3

**Topics:** "Opposition"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher shares a story about a couple named Jack and Charlotte who initially did not know the Lord. After persistent visits from Christians, Jack eventually accepted Jesus and experienced a transformation in his life. However, Charlotte resisted and expressed her determination not to be saved. The preacher then discusses how Jesus extended an invitation to all people to come to him and receive eternal life through faith, with no conditions attached. However, the preacher emphasizes that when someone encounters Jesus, conflicts and opposition may arise. He explains that following Jesus comes with a cost, including facing social pressure and persecution, but reminds listeners that those who speak evil of believers will be held accountable by God.

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## Transcript

Back to Matthew chapter 10 where we were reading this morning and think on this portion of the Word of God and other portions that are similar to it. The Lord Jesus when he came to earth extended his hands in worldwide invitation to men and women to come to him and believe on him and find eternal life in him and he repeatedly made it clear to all of those who listened to him that the forgiveness of sins and life everlasting was a free gift through faith in him. Absolutely no conditions involved and this is as true today as it was then.

The Savior was unwearied and still beckoning to men and women to come to him. But the Lord Jesus realized that the moment he stood in front of someone, the moment there was a face-to-face encounter with him, some tremendous conflicts would be set in motion. This is true.

When the Lord Jesus comes to a person, there are tensions set up such as is not true in any other area of life. For instance, a political leader can stand in front of people and they don't necessarily get ruffled by it. Their deepest emotions are not necessarily stirred up by it.

You can talk to people about politics or about international affairs or our business or any of those subjects and they can remain quite calm and unmoved emotionally. But have you ever noticed that when the Lord Jesus Christ is introduced into a conversation that lips become taut, the people become restless and uneasy and fidgety? The Lord Jesus is different, isn't he? There's something different about him. And he realized this.

And he realized that when the Spirit of God began to draw a man or woman, boy or girl, close to the Lord Jesus, that a tremendous fight would ensue. And our blessed Savior realized and recognized and taught over and over again that although salvation was free through faith in him, yet there would be tremendous costs involved in trusting him. And in this portion of the Word of God, he begins to speak about some of those costs.

You remember he said in verse 34, think not that I am come to send peace on the earth. I came not to send peace, but a sword. Well, it almost seems strange to hear words like this from the lips of the one who is the Prince of Peace, doesn't it? What did the Lord Jesus mean? Well, let me just say this.

He didn't mean that his purpose in coming was to send a sword. That wasn't why he came, but he meant that this would be the inevitable result of his coming. The Lord Jesus really came and offered peace to all mankind through himself, but he realized that just in the very act of doing this, and when souls began to move closer to him, that tremendous fights would be set up, tremendous conflicts, inwardly and outwardly.

And so he said, don't think that I came to send peace on the earth. I came to send a sword. And then in the next verse, he goes on to explain exactly what he meant by it.

He said, I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be those of his own household. Now this would be the result of the Savior coming. Here's a family, let us say, and no member in that family is a Christian.

They're all unsaved, and they're all in their sins, and they're all, let us say, on the way to hell. And then somebody in that family hears the voice of the Son of God and says, this is the voice of a good shepherd. I'm going to put my faith and trust in him.

And that person comes back to the family and says, you know what happened to me? I was converted through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. I've trusted him. I've owned him as my own Savior and Lord.

And I want to tell you, the moment that that happens, the fighting begins. Now why is that? Why is such opposition generated by the coming of the Savior into a home? He said, this will be the inevitable result of my coming into that house. Bitterness, pressure of all kinds, and very distinct opposition.

And you know, the bitterness that does come in is absolutely uncanny. I could tell you some interesting stories. A family down in Albany, Georgia, and one of the young men in that family has taken to drink, and the drink has a grip on him.

He can't break himself on the habit. Another young man in that family, in fact, his twin went the other way, and he received the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior. And God called him out to the land of Turkey.

And do you know that the mother of those twins became so enraged with the young fellow that went to Turkey in the cause of Christ that she notified the American ambassador and asked him to expel her son

from the country. Now she never asked anybody to expel her drunken son. That was perfectly all right, apparently.

I'd like to say to you this morning that that son who received Christ as Savior and moved out to the regions beyond to spread the gospel of redeeming grace has caused more grief to his mother than the son who's caught in the grip of alcohol. That's what the Lord is speaking about here. I am come to set a man at variance against his father and the daughter against her mother and the daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law, and a man's foes shall be those of his own household.

Again I say this, dear friend, this wasn't the purpose of the Lord Jesus in coming. He didn't come in order to purposely do this, but this was the inevitable result of his coming, and it still is today. But then he goes on to say, he that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me.

He that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me either. Now that means this, if I hear God speaking to my heart, if I hear him saying, McDonald, you ought to be saved, you ought to come in all your sins, trust the Lord Jesus, claim the power of his blood to cleanse those sins away, and then the conflict sets up, and parents say to me, if you do it we'll put you out. And they bring all kinds of pressure to bear on me, and I have to make a choice between parents or the Lord Jesus Christ.

He says, if you love your parents more than you love me, you're not worthy of me. You know, people still have to make that choice. It's very pronounced in some countries of the world, but it's true here in the United States too.

And I have no doubt that God may be speaking to hearts here in the meeting today, and this is the thing that you're weighing in your mind, what will they think? What will they think? The Lord Jesus said, if you love them more than you love me, you're not worthy of me. You have to make a choice, and I must be supreme in your affection. When he says, he that taketh not his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me.

Of course the cross was a symbol of suffering and shame and death, and Jesus said, really, this is the pathway that I ask you to take, to follow me. Well, I tell you, it's comforting. I'm glad the Lord spoke these words.

I'm glad they're here in the pages of Holy Writ, because otherwise people might think it very strange. When they start to come to the Lord Jesus Christ, and when a civil war breaks out right in their own family, there must be something wrong. They didn't expect it would be like this.

But you can turn to Matthew chapter 10, and the Lord Jesus said, you're moving in the right direction, if this is what's happening. If this is what's happening to you, you're really moving in the right direction. Don't stop, and don't let any earthly ties prevent you from coming to me.

Well, mind you, it's not only the severing of family ties that may be involved, but something quite as strong, and that is the severing of religious ties. 2nd Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 14. 2nd Corinthians chapter 6 and verse 14 says, Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers? For what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? And what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idol? For ye are the temple of the living God.

As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. Wherefore, come ye out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you, and will be a father to you, and ye shall be my son and daughter. Dear friends, I'd like to tell you this this morning, that one of the great stubborn resistances to the gospel and the life of a person is religious ties.

That is, the associations in which you've been brought up. And then you come face to face with the Lord Jesus Christ, and it might mean a severing of those past ties. Not leaving one religion for another, but leaving a religion for a person, the Christ of God.

And I'll tell you, this brings some bitter disputes too. We have this in the Bible. We have in John chapter 9, the instance of a man who was born blind, and he had been in a certain religion all his life, and it hadn't done a thing for his blind eyes.

The people would pass by and toss their coins into his cup as they passed by, that he was just as blind as ever. And one day, the Lord Jesus Christ came along. It happened to be the Sabbath.

It happened to be Saturday. And the Lord Jesus Christ gave sight to that blind man, and the religious leaders were furious. They were absolutely furious.

They said, what right does he have to give sight to a blind man on the Sabbath day? That was their pretext, that he had done it on the Sabbath day. And a great inquisition followed. Why, they had this poor fellow up on a religious trial.

What was the crime? He had been given his sight on the Sabbath day. What a terrible thing to try a fellow for. And they called his parents in.

Well, his parents were afraid. They didn't want to get involved in a trouble like this, because they didn't want to get excommunicated. But they talked to this fellow, and the more they talked to this fellow, the more he witnessed to them about the Lord Jesus Christ.

And do you know what finally they did? They put him out. They put him out of their fellowship. He said, we don't want you anymore.

And that's the way it's going to be. You don't fit here anymore, and we're through with you. And they cast him out.

And you know, right outside the door, somebody was waiting for him, and his name was Jesus. They cast him out into the arms of the Lord, and the Lord Jesus received him. And I'll tell you, I'd rather be outside the door with Christ than inside the door without him.

And that's what he said here. He says, wherefore come ye out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing. A beautiful, beautiful verse of Scripture.

Some years ago, there was a young couple in Chicago who neither of them knew the Lord. Jack was of Holland background, and Charlotte was of Polish background. And then contact was made with them, and Jack was fighting like a fish on the line, and wouldn't go to any of the meetings.

But some of the Christians persistently visited in the home, and finally, after a year or two, Jack finally bowed the knee to the Lord Jesus Christ. And my God saved his soul, and saved his personality as well,

and it was a new life for Jack. Well, when some of the Christians used to go and visit with Jack, his wife would be out in the kitchen.

She'd be out there with her sister, and she'd be snarling, and she'd be sneering, and she'd say, I ain't got Jack, but they'll never get me, you know. And she was really putting up a fight. And one servant of the Lord used to go to the door sometimes, and she'd come to the door, and he'd say, Charlotte, are you saved yet? Oh, she'd just be so furious when he'd say that.

And she fought, and she fought, and she fought. And then one time, some of the sisters invited her out to a missionary meeting. You never think that anybody gets saved at a missionary meeting.

She went to the meeting, and just that chance remark, just that casual remark, and Charlotte trusted the Lord Jesus Christ that day. And that set up a conflict in her life, because her mother was there in the same city, and she had brothers and sisters, and they all now belonged, of course, to the church that she used to belong to. And the Lord began speaking to her, and saying to her, Charlotte, if you really love me, you'll want to tell your mother, and your brothers, and your sisters, too.

And oh, just the thought of it made Charlotte turn weak, because she knew exactly what would happen. She knew exactly how temperamental her mother was, and she knew what kind of a scene would go on. And she fought it, and fought it, and fought it in her soul.

And then one day after Jack had gone to work, and the children were off to school, the Lord said to her, today's the day, Charlotte. And she said, oh, in the strength of the Lord, dear Charlotte, started out and down the street. And she said as she came near to her mother's home, her legs turned to India rubber.

She thought they weren't going to support her. But the Lord gave her strength, and she went in, and she witnessed a good confession of Jesus Christ before her mother. And just as expected, her mother flew into a rage, flew into a rage, threw herself down on the floor, and screamed and hollered that this could never be, that her Charlotte would never leave the church in which she was brought up.

Charlotte said, Mother, it isn't a case of leaving the church. It's a case of coming to Christ and finding salvation through him. Well, I want to tell you, it was a stormy day, a stormy day.

You know, shortly after that, one of Charlotte's sisters was taken to the hospital. That dear girl was a drug addict. She was taken to the hospital, a terminal case with cancer.

And Charlotte had the privilege of going to the hospital and speaking to her sister about the Lord Jesus before that girl went out into eternity. She, too, had joined the army of the redeemed. And that spoke to Charlotte's mother.

Although I can't say she's saved yet, God is working in her life, and I believe she will be yet. So Charlotte had to sever past religious ties, and I want to tell you, it cost her something. But God gave her grace, and she's a buoyant, effervescent, vivacious Christian today.

And not only does it mean severing family ties and religious ties, but oftentimes it means severing social ties. 1 Peter chapter 4, verses 3 to 5. 1 Peter chapter 4, verses 3 to 5, says, For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revelings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries, wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excessive riot, speaking evil of you, who shall give account to him that is ready to judge

the quick, that is, the living, and the dead. Now this verse of Scripture says that when a person gets saved, he looks back over the past life of sin and shame and says, that's enough.

I've had enough of that, and now I'm going to walk a new, a clean, a pure pathway for God. And then the friends come and say, don't you go to such-and-such a place anymore? They say, no. Christian says, no, I don't.

Don't you do such-and-such anymore now that you're? No, I don't do that. They say, well, you're queer. What ever happened to you? You're a fanatic.

You're a religious fanatic. They say, they speak evil of you, wherein they think it strange, that's the way they start, they think it's strange that you run with them, not to the same excess of riot. You no longer go with them in all their carousing, drunken parties, now that you're a believer in the Lord Jesus name.

Kind of an odd fish is he. And then they're not content to do that. A life of purity exposes their lives of shame and degradation, and it says they speak evil of you, speaking evil of you.

But God, the Lord says here through Peter, just remember, they're going to give a count to him who's ready to judge the living and the dead. And it's a very serious thing. Sometimes it's very difficult for young people, young people in high school, and the social pressure there in a high school, you know, what those other fellows and girls would think if I stood out for Christ.

And the Lord says, this is a cost you've got to count. There's a cost connected with trusting the Lord Jesus. You might as well face it.

He said, those who follow me, I want them to be willing to pay the price.

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