

Discussion Outline for Lesson 4

1. Thesis: A major mission for the church today is to restore/recover the definition and dynamic of worthy propriety as we live before a watching world. “Worthy propriety is described by the word “fitting.” How does the church ‘fit in’ to the world today? How does the PCA fit in to the larger body of Christ - and the church invisible throughout redemptive history? When you say, “This church is a good fit for me,” what do you mean?

2. What is fitting conduct for those who are tasked with taking the gospel into the world? (How should a sheep behave in the midst of a pack of wolves?) **Fitting-ness for missionaries. Observe the correspondence in Matthew 10 between the message and the method, between the gospel carrier and the manner in which he lives, as evidenced in:**

In the places in which the missionaries stay. (v. 11)

In the lives of those who welcome their message. (v. 13)

In the manner in which those who are sent live in dependence upon the One who sent them.

(vv. 9, 10)

In their willingness to endure trial.

(vv. 18-20)

In their boldness to proclaim the message.

(v. 16)

In the manner in which they confess Christ and Christ then confesses them. (v. 32)

In the manner in which they expect division, even within a family. (vv. 21, 34ff)

In the loyal devotion, even when it results in isolation or exclusion from those closest to you.

(vv. 35, 36)

In the manner of service - even a cup of cold water “in Christ’s name” is acceptable service.

(vv. 40, 42)

Acceptable service demands sacrificial service.

3. Matthew 10 provides much to learn from: “worthiness”; it does not speak of holy blamelessness, but of correspondence, likeness, congruence between the Pattern and its replication. Like pieces of a puzzle that fit together. In fact, they have been carefully engineered to fit together by design. This evidently is essential for the missionary life of testimony. There is correspondence between the ones sent out and the One who sends. Unlike perhaps the televangelist who preaches Christ but lives like a rich king. (They must, for congruence sake, teach others a prosperity gospel.) “Men are exceedingly prone to make their principles conform to their lifestyle” (Edwards’ sermon from 2 Tim. 4). A man’s religion determines his moral character, yes, but also a man’s moral character determines his religion.

4. Connect here to Paul’s example: 1 Thess. 2:1-12. What are some of Paul’s missionary manners as he here relates them?

5. Edwards, page 442, final statements of the treatise... **a definition of faith.** “The proper signification of the word ‘trust,’ according to the more ordinary use of it, both in common speech and in the Holy Scriptures, is the emboldening and encouragement of a person’s mind, to run some venture in practice, or in something that he does on the credit of another’s sufficiency and faithfulness. And, therefore, the proper evidence of his trusting, is the venture he runs in what he does... For a man to run a venture on a dependence on another, is for him to do something from that dependence by which he seems to expose himself, and which he would not do, were it not for that dependence. (*Live like sheep among wolves.*) And, therefore, it is in complying with the difficulties, and seeming dangers of Christian practice, in a dependence on Christ’s sufficiency and faithfulness to bestow eternal life, that persons are said to venture themselves upon Christ, and trust in Him for happiness and life. They depend on such promises as that in Matthew 10:39, ‘He that loseth his life for My sake, shall find it.’ And so they part with all, and venture their all, in a dependence on Christ’s sufficiency and truth. And **this is the Scripture notion of trusting in Christ**, in the exercise of a saving faith in Him.” (See examples from Heb. 11.)

“Faith is to believe what we do not see, and the reward of this faith is to see what we believe” Augustine.

6. In verses 37 and 38 decrees, not suggestions, are declared. How would you summarize in your own words Jesus’ requirements about the cost of discipleship?

7. Consider this quotation from Edwards (Treatise on Religious Affections, page 203) Some who are grateful towards God “have formed in their minds such a God as suits them, and thinking God to be such a one as themselves (see Psa. 50), who favors and agrees with them, they may like Him very well, and feel a sort of love to Him, when they are far from loving the true God. And men’s affections may be much moved towards God, from self-love, by some remarkable outward benefits received from God.” In other words, we *fit* our image of God to be an idol that suits our desired religion.

So worthiness makes a comparison. What is the Lord Christ worth? What will you give up to be identified with Him? What is the Lord Christ in comparison to everything else?

8. Christians should “profess to give themselves entirely to Christ, and to God through Him; as the children of Israel, when they publicly recognized their covenant with God” **Deut 26:17, 18** - ‘Today you have proclaimed the LORD to be your God, and that you will walk in His ways and keep His statutes, His commandments, and His judgements, and that you will obey His voice. Also today the LORD has proclaimed you to be His special people, just as He promised you, that you should keep all His commandments.’” “All the words which the LORD has said we will do.” (See also Ex. 19:8; 24:3; 2 Kings 23:3; Neh. 10:28, 29) (Edwards, page 406) When these covenant oaths were made they were made publicly and sworn together as a holy nation. They were together as the people of God in their commitment. This example applies to church membership today, does it not? Are not those who join Christ’s Church making a public covenant before God to be His entirely, and to be joint members with those He was graciously chosen to be His? “Feed My sheep.” Identify yourself with My interests in other people, not, identify *Me* with *your* interests in other people” (Oswald Chambers, Oct. 18, MUFHH)

But Edwards’ major point, is that even though people should profess these things with their mouths, the primary and only reliable proof that they are truly converted is the conduct of the

lives lived out. "Passing affections easily produce words; and words are cheap; and godliness is more easily feigned in words than in actions. Christian practice is a costly, laborious thing. The self-denial that is required of Christians, and the narrowness of the way that leads to life, does not consist in words, but in practice. Hypocrites may much more easily be brought to talk like saints, than to act like saints" (page 402).

"They ought to profess a willingness of heart to embrace religion with all its difficulties, and to walk in a way of obedience to God universally and perseveringly... They ought to profess, that all their hearts and souls are in these engagements to be the Lord's and forever to serve Him.... to give themselves to Him as their King; that they give Him their hearts and their whole man; and are willing and resolved to have God for their whole and everlasting portion; and in a dependence on His promises of a future eternal enjoyment of Him in heaven, to renounce all the enjoyments of this vain world, selling all for this great treasure and future inheritance, and to comply with every command of God, even the most difficult and self-denying, and devote their whole lives to God's service; and that in forgiveness of those that have injured them, and a general benevolence to mankind, ***their hearts are united to the people of Jesus Christ as their people, to cleave to them and love them as their brethren, and worship and serve God, and follow Christ in union and fellowship with them, being willing and resolved to perform all those duties that belong to them, as members of the same family of God and mystical body of Christ. I say, for persons solemnly to profess such things as these, as in the presence of God, is the same thing as to profess that they are conscious to, or do experience such things in their hearts.***" (page 406 - 409, Canon Press) Put in OT reference about covenant making...

Close with this quotation from Religious Affections: "By the sight of the transcendent glory of Christ, true Christians see Him worthy to be followed; and so are powerfully drawn after Him; they see Him worthy that they should forsake all for Him: by the sight of that superlative amiableness, they are thoroughly disposed to be subject to Him, and engaged to labor with earnestness and activity in His service, and made willing to go through all difficulties for His sake. And it is the discovery of this divine excellency of Christ, that makes them constant to Him: for it makes a deep impression upon their minds, that they cannot forget Him; and they will follow Him whithersoever He goes, and it is in vain for any to endeavor to draw them away from Him."

Extras Calvin, "He does not have God as his Father, who does not have the Church as his mother." (And Cyprian)

Emphasize "Beware! Never make the Effect the Cause." Our devotion to Christ is not the Cause of God's gracious salvation; it is the Effect of His gracious intervention in our lives. For instance, sanctification is the effect, not the cause of justification.