

Matthew 10:1 ¶ And when he had called unto *him* his twelve disciples, he gave them power *against* unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

At the end of the last chapter Jesus instructed His disciples to pray that the Lord would send laborers into the harvest, and in this chapter we will read that He sends out the twelve. This reminds me that as I pray for the spread of the gospel and the truth of God's word, I need to be a servant willing to do my part.

Before sending the disciples out, however, Jesus empowered them with authority to cast out unclean spirits and the ability to heal sickness and disease. This reminds me that the Lord will never ask me to do something for which He has not equipped me.

As the man Jesus, the Son of God possessing the fullness of the indwelling Holy Spirit, He was authorized to gift the disciples with the abilities they needed to serve Him. I can't help but wonder sometimes, how much I have and am squandering the gifting of the Spirit in my own life. It grieves me to think that I have been and am so focused on me and mine that I am sure I have missed out on wonderful opportunities to use those spiritual giftings to bless others just because I haven't recognized such opportunities.

**Matthew 10:2 Now the names of the twelve apostles are these; The first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son of* Zebedee, and John his brother;
Matthew 10:3 Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James *the son of* Alphaeus, and Lebbaeus, whose surname was Thaddaeus;
Matthew 10:4 Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him.**

These verses are one of four sections of scripture in which the disciples are names; the others are found in Mark 3, Luke 6 and Acts 1. The only differences in the lists are that Thaddeus is named in Matthew and Mark and Judas, the brother of James, is identified in Luke and Acts. I believe these are referencing the same person—Thaddeus Judas or Judas Thaddeus, brother of James and son of Alphaeus.

Obviously, Judas Iscariot, the one that betrayed the Lord Jesus, is omitted from the list in Acts and is actually replaced by Mathias through the casting of lots. Some argue that this was not according to God's will. However, the Holy Spirit inspired scripture, and Paul made reference to Jesus being seen by the "twelve" after His resurrection; he obviously accepted Mathias as a legitimate replacement for Judas.

1 Corinthians 15:3–5 "For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve...."

Matthew 10:5 ¶ These twelve Jesus sent forth, and commanded them, saying,

Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samaritans enter ye not:

Matthew 10:6 But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

It's important to remember that the focus of Jesus' ministry was to the people of Israel. The spread of the gospel to the Gentile nations would not begin until after He had been officially rejected by the Jews and crucified and resurrected to new life. At that point, the focus for spreading the gospel shifted from the Jews to include all people on planet earth. Having said that, we note that Jesus commanded His disciples to go only to the people of Israel—no Gentiles, no Samaritans.

Isn't it interesting that the Lord referenced the Jewish people as "lost sheep?" I believe it was a statement bemoaning the fact that they were lost because they were without a true shepherd. The prophet Jeremiah noted this to be true concerning the Jewish people in his day.

Jeremiah 50:6 "My people hath been lost sheep: their shepherds have caused them to go astray...."

They were lost because they were paying more heed to the traditions of men than the truth of God's word. Those who should have been leading the people as spiritual shepherds were caught up in pride and serving self; the same as in Ezekiel's time.

*Ezekiel 34:2–3 "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; **Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock.**"*

If they had been focusing on the truth of God's word, they would have recognized that it was the time foretold by Daniel that the Messiah would come and that Jesus testified to the truth that He was that Messiah through His miracles and His teaching. John records the words of Jesus declaring this truth.

*John 5:36–39 "But I have greater witness than that of John: for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, **the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.** And the Father himself, which hath sent me, hath borne witness of me. Ye have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his shape. And ye have not his word abiding in you: for whom he hath sent, him ye believe not. Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me."*

Matthew 10:7 And as ye go, preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand.

Matthew 10:8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

Jesus sent the disciples out with specific instructions to preach: "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." Every Jewish person would have understood that message to mean that the Messiah was ready to establish Himself on the throne of David

to rule over Israel. The disciples were then to heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead and cast out devils as evidence of the truth of their message.

Jesus emphasized that they should bless others just as freely as they had received blessing from Him. That has been a principle that has guided me in sharing with others through my websites. I believe that I should freely share the insights I am given through the ministry of the Holy Spirit as I study God's word. If I can be of help to one other person, I am blessed and, I trust, God is glorified. The flip side of that coin is that I have a healthy fear of sharing what I learn without a disclaimer. Though I feel strongly that I have a correct understanding of the main things, I know I still have much to learn. The Lord has already shown me many things through the study of His word that differ from previous teaching. Anyone using my journals should do so through the lens of their own study of scripture—as did the Bereans.

Acts 17:10–11 “And the brethren immediately sent away Paul and Silas by night unto Berea: who coming thither went into the synagogue of the Jews. These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so.”

Matthew 10:9 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Matthew 10:10 Nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

Jesus further instructed the disciples not to carry extra money, clothing or staff; they were to go as they were. They were to go in faith that God would provide their needs through the people to whom they ministered.

I think that “needs” is the key word. I believe there are many in ministry today that are in it for profit. It is truly important that the church support those in full time ministry and to do so with a heart toward their comfort and enjoyment of life, but I think it is wrong to use the tithes and offerings of the people toward the ministry to provide lavish lifestyles for said people.

Matthew 10:11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, enquire who in it is worthy; and there abide till ye go thence.

Matthew 10:12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.

Matthew 10:13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

Matthew 10:14 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet.

Matthew 10:15 Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the day of judgment, than for that city.

When the disciples entered a city or town, they were to find out who was well respected and known for his hospitality and seek lodging with that person. That certainly goes against what we would consider appropriate today, doesn't it? We wouldn't think of going to someone we had never met and asking if we could stay with them for a while. Obviously, there was a difference in the

culture of that day. Even today the attitude in the East toward providing hospitality is much different than that in the west; it is considered a duty and/or privilege.

It is also to be assumed that the person they approached was willing to accept their message, a person truly expecting the coming of Messiah. Once they had established themselves in a home, they were to remain in that home for the duration of their ministry in that town or city. They were to enter the home as friends, discern the worthiness of the host and then determine whether to remain or leave.

It seems to me that the person chosen based on his reputation was the key to the ministry of the disciples in that place. If they stayed, they were to pronounce a blessing on that home; if they were not well received, they were to leave taking with them any blessing that might have been bestowed. This seems to imply that if one of the most respected men in the community didn't accept their message, it was not likely that the rest of its residents would. Once being rejected, they were to leave the place and shake the dust from their feet in light of the people's rejection of the message. John MacArthur provided some further insight:

"When people traveled in the time of Christ, they would get covered with dust. When Jewish people returned to Israel, they did not want to bring Gentile soil into Israel with them because they believed it would defile the land. So before they entered Israel, they shook the dust off themselves so they wouldn't bring any Gentile dirt back in. So He says, "You're going to the lost sheep of the house of Israel, and if they don't hear your message, you treat them the way you treat a Gentile."

The Lord declared that the city that rejected the Messiah would face a worse judgment than did Sodom and Gomorrah. The Greek for the word "land" in verse 15 makes a point of including the inhabitants. This statement seems to imply that there are degrees of eternal punishment. The people of Sodom and Gomorrah were totally ruled by the flesh, but they had not been given the same witness of the Messiah. It seems that to knowingly reject the truth constitutes a greater sin than continuing in one's sin without the privilege of such a direct witness to that truth. It also indicates that knowing one had been presented with the truth and rejecting it will be cause for greater suffering as well.

Matthew 10:16 ¶ Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Jesus warned His disciples that He was sending them out as sheep among wolves. In light of that truth, they were to be as wise as serpents and as harmless as doves.

The world as a whole is now under the rule of Satan, the enemy, and is a dangerous place for true followers of Jesus. I think history reverberates with the truth that those who choose to follow the Lord are perceived as being weak and gullible. They are often targeted for persecution, attack and ridicule. As representatives of Christ, we are to follow Him in complete obedience as sheep,

yet conduct ourselves with wisdom and humility. In other words, don't knowingly put yourself in unnecessary danger; yet, don't hesitate to follow God's leading no matter where it may take you.

This also seems to imply that we are to trust the Lord for our protection in whatever danger we might find ourselves and not seek our own revenge—and I think the next few verses lend credence to this conclusion. Scripture reminds us that vengeance belongs to God.

Deuteronomy 32:43 "Rejoice, O ye nations, with his people: for he will avenge the blood of his servants, and will render vengeance to his adversaries...."

Romans 12:19 "Dearly beloved, avenge not yourselves, but rather give place unto wrath: for it is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord."

To be "harmless" as doves is to be "unmixed, simple"—without deceit. We are to present the gospel message honestly, boldly and simply. The Lord would never have us stoop to the tactics used by the enemy, the father of lies and master of deceit.

John 8:44 "Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it."

I liked a summary statement by JFB on this verse: "Wonderful combination this! Alone, the wisdom of the serpent is mere cunning, and the harmlessness of the dove little better than weakness: but in combination, the wisdom of the serpent would save them from unnecessary exposure to danger; the harmlessness of the dove, from sinful expedients to escape it."

Matthew 10:17 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues;

Matthew 10:18 And ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

Matthew 10:19 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak.

Matthew 10:20 For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

Jesus goes on to warn the disciples that they could expect to be brought before the courts, accused as criminals and beaten in the synagogues. Some would even stand accused before governors and kings because of their testimony for Jesus. Their treatment before these authorities will be used as evidence against those authorities in the day of judgment.

Note that the Lord says "when," not "if" they are accused in those courts; they are to trust the Lord to put the words in their mouths in answer to their accusations. He promises that the Spirit of God the Father will speak through them at such times.

Mark 6 and Luke 9 are parallel passages to this sending of the twelve. In those chapters we find information that is not included in Matthew concerning the return of the disciples from their mission.

Mark 6:30 "And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught."

Luke 9:10 "And the apostles, when they were returned, told him all that they had done. And he took them, and went aside privately into a desert place belonging to the city called Bethsaida."

There are no indications in those texts of encountering the difficulties about which Jesus began warning them in this section of verses. I believe that the words of Jesus are prophetic at this point. The true persecution of the followers of Jesus began after His resurrection once the disciples began to go throughout Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the rest of the world as directed by the Lord before His ascension.

Acts 1:8 "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

Matthew 10:21 And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against *their* parents, and cause them to be put to death.

Matthew 10:22 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

Sadly, the message of salvation by faith alone through Christ alone divides family to the point that brother will testify against brother, father against child, and child against parents—even to the judgment of death. This is not to be unexpected since Jesus specifically warned His disciples that it would be so.

I cannot help but think of how hard it is for a Jewish child to declare to tell his/her family that hold to the traditions of their faith that they have chosen to become a follower of Jesus. The same is true of those from families that follow the teachings of Islam. They face complete rejection as part of the family at the least and even death in connection with Islam.

The bond of family love should be the greatest bond of relationship that one can enjoy and upon which one can always depend. Sadly, the family unit has been so undermined by the enemy that this is no longer universally true. I believe this sad fact will be most prominent during the rule of the Antichrist during the last seven years on planet earth before Jesus returns as King. I can't help but reminded of the words of Jesus concerning end times.

Matthew 24:12 "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold."

The stronger the prevailing influence of evil spiritual forces throughout the world, the weaker will be the bonds of love even in family.

Matthew 10:23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of man be come.

Again Jesus precedes a statement about coming persecution for those who declare the gospel message with “when,” not “if.” In the face of persecution, if possible, the disciples were to flee to another city; they weren’t to weakly submit to such treatment—they were to flee!

My first thought was that “the Son of man be come” was in context in reference to the message of the coming of the kingdom. In accordance with that line of thinking, I remembered that the man Jesus was limited in what He knew before His resurrection. He made a point of this fact as recorded by Mark.

Mark 13:26–32 “And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory.... Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done. Heaven and earth shall pass away: but my words shall not pass away. But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.”

Still, I believe the Lord’s words were inspired by the Holy Spirit; so I went searching for other opinions.

David Guzik offered the following: “...it is better to see His “coming” in *this* passage as His *coming in judgment* upon Judea in AD 70 which did happen before the gospel came to *every* city in Israel. This is the fulfillment of *the day of judgment* warned of in Matthew 10:15.”

John Lightfoot: ““Ye shall not have travelled through the cities of Israel preaching the gospel, before the Son of man is revealed by his resurrection....”

Wayne Jackson explains another view in an article at www.christiancourier.com: “Another view, with somewhat stronger support (but not one of which we are persuaded) is that the “coming” of 10:23 has to do with the inauguration of the kingdom of Christ on the day of Pentecost (Cottrell, pp. 536, 542). In favor of this position is the fact that there is a sense in which the arrival of the kingdom was a “coming” of the Lord, that is, he came **representatively**, in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit (cf. Jn. 14:18), and in the manifestation of his regime. Listen to Matthew’s affirmation elsewhere: “Verily I say unto you, There are some of them that stand here, who shall in no wise taste of death, till they see the Son of man **coming in his kingdom**” (Mt. 16:28; emp. added).”

Though Mr. Jackson wasn’t persuaded of the theory he presented (he was aligned with Mr. Guzik), it actually makes the most sense to me in context.

Matthew 10:24 The disciple is not above *his* master, nor the servant above his

lord.

Matthew 10:25 It is enough for the disciple that he be as his master, and the servant as his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of his household?

Matthew 10:26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

In these verses the Lord explains that a servant should not expect to get treated any better than his master is treated. The obvious comparison—Jesus is the master, the disciples the servants. My paraphrase: If they have called me (Jesus) Beelzebub, you can expect the same or worse.

Jesus is referring to an event recorded in chapter 12.

Matthew 12:22–25 “Then was brought unto him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and he healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw. And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the son of David? But when the Pharisees heard it, they said, This fellow doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the prince of the devils. And Jesus knew their thoughts....”

Jesus declares that they have no reason to fear those that would persecute them. Why will be explained in the following verses.

I liked Guzik’s thoughts on the last part of verse 26: “Jesus promised His persecuted followers that the truth of their honorable sacrifice would be known, even if the persecutors did their best to hide it among the pages of history. God would reveal all and justify His servants and reveal the crime of those who thought they had hidden it.”

JFB adds a little to that perspective: “...right and wrong, truth and error, are about to come into open and deadly collision; and the day is coming when all hidden things shall be disclosed, everything seen as it is, and every one have his due.”

Matthew 10:27 What I tell you in darkness, *that speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, that preach ye upon the housetops.*

Matthew 10:28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

“Darkness” is a reference to obscurity. The Lord is basically saying (my paraphrase), “I want you to declare boldly and publicly the things that I have taught you in private. Don’t be afraid of what men can do to you; they can only hurt your body, not your soul—the real you. Fear and reverence God, the One with the power and authority to condemn both soul and body to hell.”

I thought it significant that the Lord refers to “both soul and body” in connection with the whole person. I think that is because eternal punishment includes both emotional and physical suffering. It also seems to indicate to me that emotional

suffering will probably be the worst since soul is listed first.

Matthew 10:29 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.

Matthew 10:30 But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Matthew 10:31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

In these verses Jesus explains the intimate care that God has over His creation. He presents the sparrow as being of very little value in man's eyes, yet not one of them falls to death with the Father's knowledge. We are far more valuable to Him than the sparrows. In fact, He is so intent on the care of His children that every hair on our head is numbered. I liked John MacArthur's comment on this: "And it doesn't say that God counts them, He numbers them. Each one has its own number. Oops...there goes #28."

Matthew 10:32 Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 10:33 But whosoever shall deny me before men, him will I also deny before my Father which is in heaven.

As I read these verses, the first thought that came to me was: "What does it mean to confess Jesus?" When I looked at the Greek, I was surprised to see that "confess" was a compound of two words. Not only does it mean to acknowledge Jesus for who He is, it carries the idea of giving oneself wholly to Him; in other words, it is acknowledging Him as Lord of one's life. Jesus promises that if we publicly acknowledge Him as Lord, He will acknowledge us as belonging to Him before the Father in heaven. That compound also included the thought of "a relation of rest." It reminds me that when we submit ourselves to Jesus as Lord, we gain a position of rest in Him before the Father. He is our rest, our Sabbath.

Matthew 11:28–29 "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Hebrews 4:4–10 "For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works....For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his."

Note that Jesus declares that He will confess those who are His before "His" Father; God only becomes "our" Father in light of our being acknowledged by Jesus as His.

Matthew 10:34 Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

Matthew 10:35 For 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.

Matthew 10:36 And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

This is another one of the hard truths of scripture. Jesus came to earth to destroy the works of Satan, the god of this world.

1 John 3:8 "He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil."

*2 Corinthians 4:3–4 "But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: In whom **the god of this world** hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them."*

To destroy the works of the devil involves infiltrating enemy territory in which one is bound to encounter opposition. It presupposes a war against the forces of the enemy. Every person on planet earth is a soldier in the forces of the enemy until he/she has repented of their sin and by faith accepted Jesus as Lord. That act immediately sets one at variance against those still in the camp of the enemy—including those in one's own family.

Matthew 10:37 He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Matthew 10:38 And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.

These verses declare an important truth that provides a true test of one's faith—You must love Jesus more than anyone else, be it father, mother, son or daughter. In context, this is a statement concerning choosing allegiance to Jesus or the enemy.

The beautiful truth is that once you have acknowledged Jesus as Lord, you are filled with the Holy Spirit and empowered to be able to love others as He has loved us.

John 13:34 "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."

Matthew 5:43–44 "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you...."

This is a far greater love than that we possess by instinct. It is the ability to love unconditionally and to act in accordance with God's word so as to lead others we love to embrace Jesus as Lord. Sometimes those actions will require one to exercise "tough love."

To love Jesus as Lord takes the whole person.

Mark 12:30 "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy

soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."

Only by confessing Jesus as Lord can we be accounted worthy, a word that accounts one "deserving due reward."

Matthew 5:11–12 "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great is your reward in heaven:"

Colossians 3:23–24 "And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ."

Hebrews 11:6 "But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

To confess Jesus as Lord is to die to self. To confess Jesus as Lord is to be willing to follow Him no matter the sacrifice required or danger encountered, even to the point of death.

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

If one's focus in this present world is to preserve his life at all costs, he is ever confronted with the truth that he will eventually die. If, however, one is will to follow Jesus as Lord to the point of death, he will find true life, eternal life in the presence of God.

Matthew 10:40 He that receiveth you receiveth me, and he that receiveth me receiveth him that sent me.

Matthew 10:41 He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward; and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

When one embraces Jesus as Lord, we are commissioned as His ambassadors, His representatives.

2 Corinthians 5:17–20 "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ....Now then we are ambassadors for Christ...."

As representatives of Jesus, those who receive us do so in light of who we represent, and those who receive Jesus receive the One He represents—God the Father.

A prophet refers not only to a foreteller, but a forthteller. In context, I think a prophet is one that is declaring the truth of God's word. The righteous man appears to be a reference to one that is doing the will of God though not

specifically declaring or teaching God's word. Either way, when one who represents Jesus is well received by others, those who receive him/her will reap a reward accordingly.

Matthew 10:42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

In context, it would seem that "these little ones" refers back to the prophet and righteous man from the preceding verses. When I looked at the Greek, I think "least" would have been a better choice. In other words, any act of kindness, no matter how small, shown a follower of Jesus, no matter how lowly his position may appear to be, will go unrewarded.

I think the emphasis from the context is that anything we do for one of the least of His followers, Jesus considers it done unto Him. I couldn't help but think of the following verses as I wrote this.

Matthew 25:37-40 "Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."