

# Lectionary Gospel Commentaries

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**Based on the Lectionary Pericope Covering:**

**Matthew 10:34-42**

SOLA-LSB (Lutheran Service Book):  
RCL (Revised Common Lectionary):

Year A - Proper 8, Text: Matthew 10:34-42  
Year A - Proper 8, Text: Matthew 10:40-42

Matthew's Gospel contains five discourses: Chapters 5–7, 10, 13, 18, and 24–25. Chapter 10 might be outlined as follows:

- 10:1–4 The mission of the Twelve
- 10:5–15 The commissioning of the Twelve
- 10:16–25 Persecutions to be expected
- 10:26–36 Dealing with persecution
- 10:37–39 Conditions of discipleship
- 10:40–42 Rewards

The meaning of today's pericope becomes a little more obvious if we are aware of the message that precedes it. The focus of verses 34–39 has to do with the implications of acknowledging or denying Jesus.

**Verse 10:34:** The term “sword” denotes pain and warfare, a world in conflict. God's plan and desires for the world confound and contradict human dreams and systems. Sinful human nature does not welcome Jesus' kind of kingdom. As Jesus encountered strong opposition during His ministry, advocates of His real message encounter stiff opposition still today. After all, Jesus' message constitutes a declaration of war against the powers of evil — powers that humanity by nature is all too willing to embrace.

**Verses 10:35–36:** Jesus quotes Micah 4:21. In doing so, He points to the impact that His message can have. It can shatter the relationships between father and son, mother and daughter, daughter-in-law and mother-in-law, and those within family circles. In Matthew 10:21, Jesus had quoted Micah 7:6 to make His disciples aware of the fierce opposition that they can expect to meet — because of the message that they proclaim about the nature of God's true Kingdom.

**Verse 10:37:** Jesus expands on Micah's message to point out that those who love the old world rather than the new world of God are not worthy of Him or the wonder of participating in the Kingdom of God that has broken into history with his Person and ministry.

**Verses 10:38–39:** The word “cross” surfaces for the first time in Matthew's Gospel. Those who refuse to take up Jesus' cross reject the wonder and glory of God's true Kingdom. However, those who shoulder Jesus' cross heed Jesus' call to Kingdom life, and find true life — a true, indestructible, eternal relationship with God.

**Verses 10:40–42:** The coming of God's Kingdom does more than shatter and divide, or create dissension. Some receive and embrace the message with joy and welcome those who proclaim it with open arms. Those who demonstrate and practice that openness receive Jesus, and those who receive Jesus receive the God who sent Him!

Who are the envoys of the Envoy of God the Father? They are the prophets, the proclaimers, who are endowed with the authority to heal the sick and cast out demons — and yet are persecuted. They are the righteous ones, those who are obedient and who practice and teach the higher righteousness of God's Kingdom. They are the quite ordinary, seemingly ungifted members of the new community. All these are fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters in God's new community. The smallest act of encouragement or love done to any of them, to support them as prophet or disciple, has its reward.

We would do well to note that Jesus' instructions make no reference to issues of organization, administration, church offices, liturgy, and doctrine. All attention is focused on the singular authority of the Twelve to bear witness to Jesus and on the breaking in of God's Kingdom among all people residing on Planet Earth.

The following verse, titled “Show Me” by Edgar Albert Guest, deserves careful thought. It is applied here to our witness to Christ:

*I'd rather see a [Christian] than hear one any day. I prefer to have you walk with me than merely tell the way. The eye's a better pupil —*

*more convincing than the ear. Your words may be confusing; your example's always clear...*

*I can soon learn how to do it if you'll let me see it done. I can watch your hands in action, but your tongue too fast may run. And the lectures you deliver may be wise and true, but I'd rather get my lesson by observing what you do. For I may misunderstand you and the high advice you give, but there's no misunderstanding how you act and how you live*