

Matthew 10: 37-42

**Jesus said to his apostles:**

**“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;  
and whoever does not take up his cross  
and follow after me is not worthy of me.**

**Whoever finds his life will lose it,  
and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

**Whoever receives you receives me,  
and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.**

**Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet  
will receive a prophet’s reward,  
and whoever receives a righteous man because he is righteous man  
will receive a righteous man’s reward.**

**And whoever gives only a cup of cold water  
to one of these little ones to drink  
because the little one is a disciple—  
amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward.”**

### **Meditation**

**There are two lines in the 1996 movie Jerry McQuire  
that drive me absolutely bananas....**

**One is: “I love you for the man I know you can be”...**

**When I heard that, I thought to myself:**

**“Giirrrllll.....you are in trouble.**

**You better love him for what he is right now,**

because you do not know if he will become who you want to him be....

And the other line is this one:

“He completes me”...really?

I understand one person balancing the other...

such as one who likes to stay home on weekends....and the other who loves to go out..

hopefully, in due time during their relationship they will balance out each other...

But to say that one person ‘completes’ another,

sets the relationship for failure

because it puts expectations on that person which they cannot possibly fulfill ...

and which ultimately don’t belong on the other ....

When we hear this reading literally it can be dangerous.

With our 21<sup>st</sup> century ears, minds and hearts, Jesus sounds more like a cult leader than a transformative Messiah...

To place Jesus in priority over our parents and family

is what people like Jim Jones did back in the ‘70’s

and we all know how terrible that turned out...

For those who do not know Jim Jones...

he was a Christian religious cult leader who demanded ultimate loyalty to himself as the new messiah...

and eventually led over 900 people to commit suicide

So, of course, the question is:

what did Jesus really mean?

What we are discussing today is where do we find our ultimate value...

Do we expect our families, our jobs, our status, our ego identities

to give us what we need the most?

Jesus is say that they can not....

All of these very good things can only give us  
what modern scholars call 'proximate value' not ultimate value.

If we want our families to give us ultimate value,  
they will surely disappoint us...

No one can ever all ways love us exactly the way that is most healthy,  
most beneficial for us...

because the other person is as human as we are...full of limitations and unconscious  
biases, issues and prejudices...

If we look to our job or the status we hold in society for our ultimate value...  
well...we can well imagine why that is not a good idea...

If we look to ourselves, our ego identities, our self made images  
of who we think we are for our ultimate value:

for better or for worse,

well...we all have blind spots,

we all have misconstrued perceptions of who we think we are...

sometimes we inflate our self perceptions

and sometimes we berate our selves...

most of which is not based on who we truly, essentially are

What Jesus is saying that it is only in the Divine

will we know our truest selves: made in God's image....

as we live our lives in such a way to become God's likeness...

When he said: "Whoever receives you receives me,

and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.

He is saying that when we open ourselves to the life of the Christ we open ourselves to the  
flow of the Holy One in and through us

**and then we find what is of ultimate value:  
compassion, kindness, generosity and forgiveness...  
When we open ourselves to this flow Holy Relationship  
we find we are connected with what is of ultimate value:  
Holy, Cosmic, Divine Love.**

**Not a small love as in “you complete me”  
or I love you because of the man I know you can be....  
Not a small love as in: “if you really loved me, you would do x, y or z...”  
or not a small love as in:  
“I love you because you provide me a nice home or fancy vacations  
or you look like eye candy....  
Now, please...I am not negating the goodness of healthy relationships,  
but even the best human relationships can only offer us a glimpse  
of what the Love of the Holy is like...**

**But the ultimate Love which gives us a ground from which we can see and accept  
our limitations as well as our gifts...**

**But an ultimate Love which holds all of life,  
human and other than human life  
with respect and consideration**

**When we see ourselves connected to the flow of Holy Love  
we do not judge ourselves as more or less than worthy,  
but we see where we can grow,  
and we want to grow...**

**as a matter of fact,  
when we see ourselves as grounded in Holy Love  
it is not so much a matter of ‘having to be kind’ or**

thinking that we 'should' be generous or forgiving  
but we find ourselves not being able to do otherwise....

We WANT to do, to speak, and to be:  
just, compassionate, kind, generous, and loving...  
these are ultimate values that that guide our relationships to our family,  
our jobs, our neighborhood and to ourselves...

When we are living in congruence with these ultimate Values...  
the ultimate Source of our life...  
it is there that we find our worth and our ultimate value...

Then all of those other criteria:  
are we or they beautiful?  
strong?  
smart?  
tough?  
don't really matter so much anymore...  
then how much we weigh doesn't matter  
or how big our paycheck  
or the color of our skin  
or how fancy our car,  
or our how new phone might happen to be...  
none of that holds ultimate value anymore...  
Sure...we might prefer x, y or z...  
but we can hold our preferences more lightly  
and live life more gratefully  
and we can let out a long sigh of relief...  
and then we can truly, honestly, sincerely  
and humbly say 'thank you!' amen.

