

June 21st 2026

Matthew 10:24-39

Pray

Movies come with ratings, Medications with a list of side effects, toys name choking hazards, and McDonalds Coffee says, "Caution Hot." Our world and lives are filled with all sort of warnings. I wonder should church come with a warning label?

What would you put on a church warning label? What should someone know before attending, participating, and certainly before taking the leap to becoming a member? Are there risks to following Jesus?

Warning:

- Coffee is bad and clapping on 2 and 4 is a work in progress
 - You will be invited to volunteer, to give of your time, talent, and treasure
 - You will be challenged to care for neighbor and for creation
 - You will be invited to be vulnerable, ask questions, voice doubt, talk about Jesus
 - There will be differences of opinion, times where toes might be stepped on.
- Community is hard work.
- Your worldview may change, your heart may grow
 - Warning transformation is possible.

Now warnings are not inherently negative. Yes, they are used to limit liability but warnings are also meant to be an act of transparency one that names potential risks. This is part of Jesus motivation this morning.

At this point in the story Jesus has preached the sermon on the mount teaching his followers to love God and love Neighbor. Jesus has shown us what mercy looks like with healing after healing. The next step for his disciples is to be sent. He gathers the 12 and gives them their marching orders, "Proclaim that the kingdom of heaven has come near." He adds, heal the sick, take no payment, travel light, and stay where you are welcomed. Oh, and before you go, a little heads up, if they call me the devil imagine what they will call you? Jesus gives clear warning that following him will lead to division, conflict, turmoil, son against father, daughter against mother, members of your own household will be your foe's. "Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it."

Should we put a sign out front that says, "Warning you may lose your life?"

Jesus is not sugar coating the consequences his first followers will face. There is the threat of persecution from Rome and leaders who would seek to maintain their power. There is conflict with religious leaders who view Jesus ministry as an attack on long standing traditions. There will be fighting within families who don't understand why loved ones would join this movement that abandons one's way of life and inherited identity.

I hear Jesus words this morning and while I appreciate transparency it puts my stomachs into knots. I am conflict avoidant. I would rather everyone get along. Lord, don't we have enough hostility and discord in our world as it is? Yes. Yes, and with all of that said, I believe that if we serious about sharing consequential love then we must be willing to bear with consequences.

So with that in mind. Let's talk baseball. Anyone hear of the controversy with the San Francisco Giants and their Pride night a little over a week ago? Each year most baseball teams have a Pride night where the team's logo is rainbow colored. Players have the option to not wear the rainbow logo. However, three pitchers for the Giants chose to wear the logo but then also chose to break the rules by writing Genesis 9:12-16 which says the rainbow is a sign of God's covenant. The perspective held by the players is that Pride nights are wrong, rainbows should be reclaimed by true Christians. The Major League Baseball sent letters saying you can't write on your uniforms, and now politicians have jumped in with their commentary including Vice President Vance who wrote on social media, "Trump won we don't have to do this anymore."

(sigh) If I take a deep breath, and set aside my anger at those who misuse their power and platforms, who forget they have safety and security that comes from bank accounts larger than all of ours combined. My heart hurts and is fearful for those children of God for whom such messaging makes them wonder if this world would be better off without them on it. The Trevor project reports 1 in 10 LGBTQ youth attempting suicide in the past year. My heart hurts and so my heart hears Jesus words with new conviction. When God's love expands who is welcomed, included, and valued, human brokenness, fear, and sin will seek to push back, just as those with power used religion in Jesus' day to attempt to limit, restrict, and deny God's Spirit at work in new ways.

Like the disciples we are sent out to proclaim God's kingdom has come near. We do this when we name divine truths like being Gay or trans is not a sin but as with all of God's creation is a gift. Rather than focusing on the bullies lets focus on what we stand for. The belief that when you follow the way of Jesus who ate with outcasts, healed the sick, and showed sacrificial radical love than inclusion and hospitality are always more faithful than exclusion, hurt, and hate. Should consequences come because we have rainbow doors, should friends and family disagree because we have decided to follow Jesus, should other churches distance themselves because they say we are too reckless with the overwhelming unending love of God than may we be assured we have loved like Jesus.

When we are lost, when we are afraid, or dismayed at the power of evil, when we question our self-worth, may we remember Jesus said he cares for the sparrows. Two sparrows for one penny God Cares for what the world had essentially declared worthless. How much more are you cared for? For you are of immeasurable value to God. The holy one who knows even the number of hairs on your head. The holy one who when the world thought Christ had pushed the limits of the Creators love too far, bore the greatest consequences of all on the cross. But who showed us not even death could limit the love of God.

Warning love, grace, mercy, and new life. Here for you and for all. Amen.