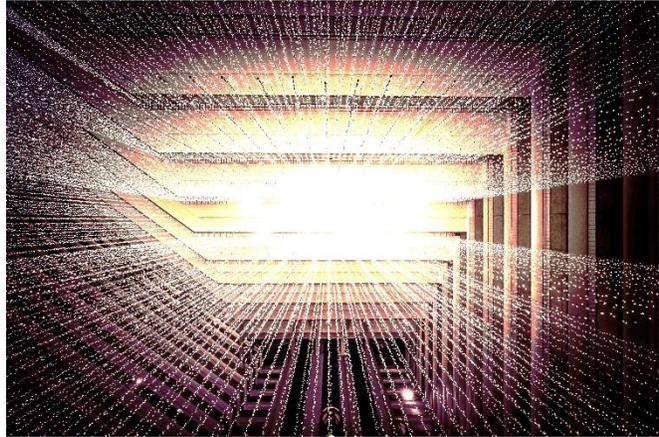


**Sent Ones: The Cost of Being Liked**  
**From the Series, “The King and I – Matthew Tells Us About the King of the Universe”**  
**By Phil Brainerd**

**Introduction**

I have a number of friends who work in the computer field. Back in the early 1990s, I went to visit one of them. He told me about a technology that was very new at the time - Something called the “Internet”. He told me that one of the features of the Internet was something called “electronic mail” or “e-mail” for short. It was a free way to send notes and messages to people.



I remember being amazed. Then I had a great thought: What would happen if we were to find some product? It wouldn't matter what it was - It could be anything. What if we could send information about that product for free to lots of people. We could get rich!

My friend told me that this was a bad idea. The Internet, he explained, was controlled by all kinds of computer specialists who were very idealistic. They wanted to keep their Invention pure - Free from corporate interests. Those computer specialists would shut down any blatant attempts to use their technology for tawdry profit. Then, he spoke immortal words - Words that I recall to this day. He said, “No one is ever going to make money on the Internet.”

Well, try telling that to a man named Jeff Bezos, who founded a company called “Amazon”. He formed it only two years after I spoke with my friend. Mr. Bezos is now worth over 200 billion dollars. Or try telling it to Mark Zuckerberg, who founded a little company called Facebook in 2004. Today, he is worth 75 billion.

As it turns out, the Internet has become very popular. And it's a great way to make money.

Speaking of Mark Zuckerberg and Facebook, they did something very interesting in 2007. They added a little button called “like”. It seemed like a small change at the time, but it changed the nature of the Internet. Some people think the “like” button changed things for the worse. I ran into an article in “The Atlantic” with the following title: “The Like Button Ruined the Internet” (James Somers, The Atlantic, March 21, 2017)

How could one button have changed things so much? And why do some people hate it? You see, the 'like' button hits one of the deepest needs of human beings: We all want to be liked.

There's nothing wrong with that, but here's the problem: Sometimes, being liked comes with a cost.

What kind of people are liked? Likeable people, of course.

- Popular people.
- Funny people.
- Attractive people.
- Talented people.

Here's a strange thought: Sometimes, you can be liked by simply learning how to agree with everyone else. Those people know how to get along.

However, there are times when we are called upon to do things that may make us unpopular. There are times when there is a wrong way to do things, and a right way. Doing the right thing might be unpopular. Doing the right thing may cause people to skip the "like" button. Add to this the other side of the Internet, the side that wants to make money. Doing unpopular things may not make money.

According to the writer of the article I just mentioned, this is making the Internet a place where most people do things that make them liked. The Internet is becoming a less friendly place for people who do otherwise.

So, it seems that, on the Internet, being liked has a cost. Is that true anywhere else?

We're working our way through the book of Mathew. We've been in chapter 10, where we've met the apostles of Jesus, also called the "sent ones." This article is the last message from that chapter. Here, Jesus tells his apostles that there's more to life than being liked. There is a cost.

Let's read what Jesus had to say to his followers.

34 "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I have come to turn

    "a man against his father,  
    a daughter against her mother,  
    a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—

36 a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'

37 "Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. 38

Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. 39

Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. 40 "Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who

welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. 41 Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. 42 And if

anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my

disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”  
(Matthew 10:34-42)

So, being liked has a cost. What is it? Let’s break this apart.

### **I. Being liked can bring false peace.**

The first thing we’re going to see is that being liked can bring false peace.

Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. (Matthew 10:34(a))

People had the idea that Jesus was going to bring peace. Where might they have gotten that idea? Actually, it wasn’t a completely wrong-headed idea. In those days, most faithful Jews knew the prophecies of the Messiah, as we’ve discussed many times in our study of Matthew. Here’s one from the prophet Isaiah:

6 For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given,  
and the government will be on his shoulders.  
And he will be called  
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

(Isaiah 9:6)

Since the Messiah will be called the “Prince of Peace”, people might think that he’s going to bring peace to the earth. Add to this: When Jesus was born, angels appeared to a group of shepherds. Anyone who comes to church at Christmas time knows what they said:

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with  
the angel, praising God and saying,  
14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

(Luke 2:13-14)

Again, it sure looks like the Messiah will bring peace on earth. So, what’s going on? Why is Jesus saying something else? In fact, Jesus is not saying something else. He’s clarifying the words that God gave to humanity through prophets and angels. You see, there are different kinds of peace.

Let’s try to define peace and its opposite, conflict. Conflict is when two entities have some kind of destructive energy or action going on between them. Peace is the absence of that conflict. In fact, the Hebrew word for peace, “Shalom” suggests even more. It has a sense of an environment full of good things - Health, happiness, fulfillment.

Here's the main point: *The type of peace depends on the entities that are involved.*

We often think of peace as "world peace". That is to say that nations do not go to war with each other. To have world peace is to say that nations are not in conflict. That's not what Jesus is talking about. Later in Matthew, Jesus talks about the end times and things that will be going on. He talks about "wars and rumors of wars" (Matthew 26:4). So, Jesus didn't come to bring world peace. He came to the earth 2,000 years ago. If he came to bring world peace, we would have had it by now.

Then, there are conflicts between people. If people don't quarrel or fight with each other, then we can say we have interpersonal peace. Jesus also did not come to bring interpersonal peace. In fact, just the opposite. Here's what he says:

I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to  
turn  
"a man against his father,  
a daughter against her mother,  
a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law  
-a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.'  
Matthew 10:34(b)-36

Jesus is going to bring a kind of sword. A sword is used to cut things apart. Jesus says that when he comes, he will cause conflict. People that should be good friends will turn on each other. Look at that: A man's enemies will be the members of his own household.

So, what kind of peace was Isaiah talking about? What kind of peace were the angels talking about? They're talking about peace between God and humans. And not all humans. Look at the words of the angels again: "...on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."

We've spoken about this in detail at other times, so let me just summarize. The whole earth is at war. We are in rebellion against God. We can't see it. When we look out the window, we might see a park with people and trees and children playing. God sees something different: He sees a world embroiled in spiritual war - A war meant to kick him off his throne.

God could choose to respond to this rebellion by wiping out all human life. Instead, he makes an offer of peace. The offer is made to all people. But, we have to accept it. If you accept God's offer of peace, then his favor rests on you, and you have peace with God.

The apostle Paul talked about this:

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. (Romans 5:1-2)

So, God offers us peace. He can offer this peace because Jesus died to pay the penalty of our sin and rebellion.

Here, we run into another problem. As I said, the world is at war with God. Why? Because the average person doesn't like God. They hate him. They don't want him on the throne of the universe. So, if you accept his offer of peace, there is a danger. Those people may not like you, either. In fact, it's highly likely that they won't like you. And so, there will be conflict between you and those people - Even if they're family members.

Here's where we have to choose. If we want to be liked by other around us, we can choose them over God. That will bring us a measure of peace. But, it's a false peace - It's short lived. None of those people will be around forever. One by one, they will die off. And then, there will be one individual left. That's God. And if you have not accepted his offer of peace on the day that you stand before him in judgment, things will go badly.

So, Jesus warns us: He came to bring peace with God. Not peace between nations. And not peace between us and other individuals. Jesus said: "I did not come to bring peace, but a sword." If we choose to be liked by people in the world, we will gain false peace. But we will lose true, eternal peace.

So, being liked has a cost. It can bring false peace. It can cause us to lose the true, eternal peace that God offers to us through Jesus Christ.

## **II. Being liked can cause us to lose our life, and the lives of the people dear to us.**

Next, we learn that being liked has another cost: It can cause us to lose our life, and the lives of the people dear to us. Let's read on:

Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me;  
anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.  
Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me.  
Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. (Matthew 10:37-39)

Jesus says that some people are not worthy of him. What does he mean by that?

Let's understand, Jesus is not talking about salvation. We all have a problem: We are sinners. We're told: "Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. (Psalm 51:5)" We're not sinners because we sinned at some point in our lives. We are born sinners. We're sinners from the time we're conceived. So, you could say that we're born unworthy.

How do we deal with sin? We can't. We need God to help us. So, God sent Jesus to die for our sins. We saw that when we read the passage from Romans 5 a moment ago. Once we accept this gift by faith, we have eternal life.

How about after that? Paul said something interesting to his friends in a place called Galatia.

Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? (Galatians 3:3)

In other words, Paul is saying that we don't come to Jesus by doing good works. After we come to Jesus, we don't then completely change to some other system. Before salvation, we don't earn God's favor and his love by good works. We don't earn God's favor and love afterwards by good works, either. If we are truly saved, we want to do good works so that we can please God. Not because we're afraid that he'll punish us because we don't. We want to do good works because we love him. We want to become like him. He does good things, so we do good things.

Now, why did Jesus come? So that he could offer salvation to the world. Because we want to please him, because we want to be like him, we do the same. We offer God's salvation by sharing the message of the gospel. Sadly, that has a cost. If we share the message of the gospel, some may not like us anymore.

And here's an irony. Everyone needs to hear the message. Otherwise, they can't be saved. So, a series of things go through our heads. We want people to like us. Most of all, we want the people closest to us to like us. - Our fathers and our mothers - Our sons and our daughters. We think to ourselves, "If I tell them who I am and what I believe, they won't like me. Maybe they'll reject me. Maybe, they'll even hurt me." So, we don't tell them.

But you see, that's not love. Jesus could have put quotations marks around the word "love" in this text. If we truly love someone, we want them to have what we have. We want them to be safe. We want them to go to heaven with us someday. If we don't tell them what we know, that won't happen.

So really, it's not a question of loving **people**. What we love in this case is **personal peace**. We love the illusion that everything is OK. That's not loving people, and that's not loving Jesus. Jesus says that people who do this are not worthy.

Jesus loved people so much that he risked their disapproval. He risked their hatred. He risked injury and death. Because he loved people, he went to the cross. That's what he says to us. At some point, we must be willing to risk everything to follow him. We must take up our cross.

This leads to another irony.

“Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.”

If you love safety and personal peace more than you love Jesus, then you don't really love Jesus. In the end, that may lead to a terrible surprise on the day that you stand in the judgement. You may have life and peace on earth, but not in eternity.

On the other hand, if you truly love Jesus, if you have truly accepted his offer of salvation, then, even if you do something that causes people kill you on earth, you will have life in eternity.

So, being liked has another cost: It can cause us to lose our life, and the lives of the people dear to us.

### **III. Being liked can cause us to lose new life, new friends, new family and a future.**

Finally, being liked can cause us to lose new life, new friends, new family and a future.

Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me, and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward. ( Matthew 10:40-41)

We've done all this talking about how some people won't like you if you stand for Jesus. On the other hand, there will be lots of people who will like you. It just won't be people you expect. There will be people who love God. They will love Jesus. If you stand with Jesus, they will like you.

You will all be rewarded together. “Anyone who welcomes you welcomes me.” You and the people who welcome you will all have Jesus. “...and anyone who welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me.” You and the people who welcome you will have the Father. “Whoever welcomes a prophet as a prophet will receive a prophet's reward” What is a prophet's reward? That's a whole message, but I guarantee you, it's good! “...and whoever welcomes a righteous person as a righteous person will receive a righteous person's reward.” Same here!

Who are these people? Peter asked about this. Here's how Jesus answered:

29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or fields for my sake will receive a hundred times as much and will inherit eternal life (Matthew 19:29)

If you stand for Jesus, people may not like you - Even those closest to you. If that's the case, though, Jesus knows. He will make sure that you are rewarded with new things, much better than the old.

What does it take to welcome someone?

And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward. (Matthew 10:42)

Look at that: "a cup of cold water". It doesn't matter if you're rich or poor. If you have a mansion to share, you can share it. If all you have is a little water, that works, too. Jesus said, "that person will certainly not lose their reward."

Let's pull this all together.

## **Conclusion**

One little button changed the nature of the Internet.

As a side note, 'like' buttons and other things are on the Internet. They're nothing wrong for us to use them, if we use them carefully. We've learned today however, that wanting to be liked can have a profound cost in our lives.

Being liked can bring false peace. Being liked can cause us to lose our life, and the lives of the people dear to us. Being liked can cause us to lose new life, new friends, new family and a future.

So, let's ask Jesus to help us. Let's ask him to help us to truly love the things that matter - The things that are eternal. Let's ask him to help us to truly love those closest to us. Truly loving people means wanting them to have the things that we enjoy. Let's ask for help so that we can find our lives, rather than lose them. If we stand for Jesus, some may dislike us, but others will like us.

And let's make sure that we help others who love Jesus. Whether it's a cup of cold water, or something more.

If we can do these things, Jesus promises us, we will never lose our reward.

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Thanks for reading! Here are some helpful links:

Trinity Church  
[www.TrinityTeaneck.org](http://www.TrinityTeaneck.org)

Phil's Site  
[PhilBrainerd.com](http://PhilBrainerd.com)

To learn how to begin a new life with Jesus Christ, visit Billy Graham's site:  
[PeaceWithGod.net](http://PeaceWithGod.net)

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