

Transcript of second half of the talk The Truth Brings “Not Peace, But a Sword”

as delivered by **Steven Bell**, Watchtower representative from Wallkill, NY
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Now there is a second occasion where the sword enters into the family, and this situation pulls at our hearts and it can result in tears and heartache for years, and it's when a family member is disfellowshipped. And this may be something that divides a family like nothing else. It may be one of our greatest tests of our loyalty.

The pain can be so great we can say, “Jehovah, what do you want from me? This is a member of my family that I love!” What does Jehovah want from us when our family member is disfellowshipped? Go back to Matthew 10, and we're gonna re-read verse 34 and 35.

He says, “Do not think I came to put peace upon the earth; I came to put, not peace, but a sword. For I came to cause division, with a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a young wife against her mother-in-law.”

What does Jehovah expect out of us even if the situation is so painful that we have a family member who is disfellowshipped? What does he want? Loyalty, that's what Jehovah wants.

Jehovah knows that this is a difficult time in our life, but he wants loyalty. We have to put him before a father, a mother and even our children if they're disfellowshipped. And if the disfellowshipping of our family is not bad enough, loyalty to Jehovah may mean we even have to endure reproach.

We may be hurting because, “I can't, can't talk to my family member.” And then someone walks up to us that we work with and said, “I thought you were a Christian. Why won't you talk to your children?” Or the disfellowshipped person may say, “My family kicked me out of the family.”

However, remember, the wrongdoer changed his relationship with Jehovah and his family. It was their actions that affected the family, not ours. If they would have remained faithful, the family would still be intact.

Still, how does a loyal one endure a situation like this? Let's look at three things that we should do.

First, keep your relationship with Jehovah strong. Don't let discouragement or the disfellowshipped person affect our relationship with Jehovah. They're not part of our relationship with Jehovah. Our relationship is between us and Jehovah alone. Remain loyal to Jehovah.

Two. Stay absorbed in spiritual activities. If we don't go to meetings, if we don't preach, if we don't read God's Word daily, if we're not talking to our heavenly father, it's going to hurt us spiritually. We need comfort. We need help. We find that in God's Word. We find that at the congregation meetings. So, remain active.

Lastly, respect the arrangement for discipline. Brothers and sisters, this is hard. Simply put, respect the decision that resulted in our family member being disfellowshipped. This is the best decision for everybody. Disloyalty to Jehovah's arrangement is not going to work.

For example, when someone is disfellowshipped, one of the reasons they want to come back into Jehovah's organization is to associate with the brothers and sisters in the congregation and likely to associate with their family. So if we associate with them when they're disfellowshipped we could actually be taking away from them a motivating factor for

wanting to be reinstated. Remain loyal to Jehovah. Doing so in every situation is the best.

Now we mentioned three things TO do. Now we're gonna mention three things NOT to do, and two of them are games not to play.

The first one is, don't play the blame game. Resist self-blame. We may think that we're at fault somehow. Remember that Jehovah holds sinners responsible for their actions. Each person has to have a personal relationship with Jehovah. Even young ones that are disfellowshipped - it's because their relationship with Jehovah was weak.

Avoid the "if only" games. "If only we would have preached more, if only I would have talked to them more. If only we would have done more in the organization. If only... If only..." Don't do that to ourselves. The disfellowshipped person left Jehovah. They knew the results of their actions. They are the ones that made the wrong choice. Don't blame ourselves.

And finally brothers, do not, never give up. Leave the matter in Jehovah's hands. Remember, even if we could get involved in their life, which we cannot, we cannot do anything in comparison to what Jehovah can do. He knows their hearts. He knows their thinking. He knows what they need much more than we do, even more than a loving parent.

But just imagine now if we remain, if we didn't remain loyal, and we talk to them and associate with them. Could you imagine the feeling we would have the night they were

reinstated and they walked up to us and said, "Why weren't you loyal to Jehovah when I was disfellowshipped?" That would cut us at our heart!

But what joy you would have if they walked up and said, "Thank you for being loyal to Jehovah! Your example motivated me to return to serve Jehovah." Remember, in all cases, being loyal to Jehovah is the most important thing.

Well, this has probably not been the most warm and fuzzy talk at the district convention this year. I have to admit that myself. It has been sobering though, hasn't it, to review Jesus' words in Matthew 10:32-38. We've been reminded that when we accept the Truth, life will not always be rosy. In fact, Jesus said the opposite. But we can have mentally the peace of God that excels all thought because we know what we're doing is right. This does not mean we're not gonna have a sword in the family or have tribulation, but we know we're loyal to Jehovah.

Regarding family members who oppose us, or family members who are disfellowshipped, the vital question is: "To whom am I going to be loyal? To whom do I have greater affection?" If we have more affection for anybody on this earth, whether it's a father, a mother, a son or a daughter than we do for Christ Jesus, we are not worthy of him.

So let us be resolved to follow Jesus' steps closely, accept our torture stake, and let us go on walking loyally in the Truth.

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http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7yLdwe_6JsU

My thoughts on this talk can be found on the following link...

<http://jwsurvey.org/cedars-blog/shun-your-disfellowshipped-loved-ones-shocking-district-convention-talk-hits-youtube>