



## Chapter & verse – John McNeil Scott (page 24)

Read Matthew 10:26-31, followed by John McNeil Scott's article.

1. In the article's first paragraph, John McNeil Scott suggests that Jesus would agree with the following statement: 'Silence – when speech is called for – makes space for evil to put down roots.' Do you agree? Can you name examples?
2. In the Bible passage, Jesus asks his disciples not to 'fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul' but to fear God instead, 'who can destroy both soul and body'. How did you react to reading those words? What does it mean to fear God?
3. John's third paragraph reminds us that 'Jesus charges his friends to keep the secret of who he is, until the time is right.' How good are you at keeping secrets? Considering the damage caused by abusers in church contexts, what do churches need to learn about when to keep secrets and when to speak out?
4. Jesus' disciples are called to bring healing and to effect 'courageous truth-telling', says John in the article's fourth paragraph. What steps can today's disciples of Jesus take towards achieving this?
5. Jesus commands us not to be afraid, for we 'are of more value than many sparrows'. How easy do you find it to be brave? Do Jesus' words comfort you amid fear?
6. After reading the Bible passage, what are your responses to John's questions: 'Is Jesus saying that when we don't speak our truth out loud, we die a little? ... If that is so, ... [how might speaking our truth] change the conversations [churches] have, the welcomes we offer and the priorities we set? And where would it lead our communities to follow such a call?'
7. John ends his article by reminding us that Christians 'are not forced into the light by fright or fear, but drawn by ... the promise of life, of love'. How can church communities foster safe, loving environments that encourage truth-telling?

# Reform

NEWS COMMENT INSPIRATION DEBATE

### Chapter 6 verse

## John McNeil Scott Chapter 6 verse

‘Is Jesus saying that when we don’t speak our truth out loud, we die a little?’



There is a fairly common view that Jesus’ words in John 6:68 are meant to be taken literally. He is saying that if we do not speak our truth out loud, we die a little. This is a very strong statement, especially given the fact that Jesus is talking about a metaphorical death.

What if Jesus is not talking about a literal death, but rather a metaphorical one? This is a possibility that is often overlooked. The words ‘die a little’ are used in a way that suggests a gradual process, rather than a sudden event. It is possible that Jesus is simply saying that when we do not speak our truth out loud, we are living a less-than-ideal life. This is a message that is meant to encourage us to speak our truth, rather than being silent.

**He makes it sound so simple!**



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For further reflection: ‘I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; ... I the Lord speak the truth, I declare what is right.’ Isaiah 45:19

Prayer: Heavenly Father, you know our greatest secrets and see the realities we hide, even from ourselves. Give us the strength and the courage, we pray, to speak our deepest truth. Amen.