

Priorities

by Don McClure

The sermon emphasizes the importance of prioritizing God's will in our lives, surrendering to His plan, and trusting in His goodness, especially when it comes to our children.

Duration: 37:23

Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:22, Psalm 37:4, Matthew 6:33, Mark 3:21-35, John 14:15

Topics: "Gods Will", "Spiritual Priorities"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of following the will of God above all else. He highlights the tragedy that occurs when people prioritize their own ideas of what is good or noble over God's will. Drawing from the story of Moses and the Israelites in the wilderness, he emphasizes the need to clearly communicate and prioritize our spiritual values to our loved ones. The speaker also shares a personal anecdote about witnessing a tense conversation between two women, highlighting the challenges of navigating relationships and discerning when to intervene.

Transcript

Mark chapter 3, and if you'll stand, I'll read out of it. I'm gonna read verse 21 and then jump ahead, so Mark chapter 3 verse 21. And when his friends heard of it, that is of Jesus, and some of the things he was saying, we'll explain it later.

It says, they went out to lay hold on him, for they said he is beside himself. Then over to verse 31, there came then his brethren and his mother, and standing without, they sent unto him, calling him. And the multitude sat about him, and they said unto him, Behold, thy mother and thy brethren without seek for thee.

And he answered them, saying, Who is my mother or my brethren? Then he looketh around on them which sat about him, and he said, Behold, my mother and my brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is my brother and my sister and mother. Let's pray, and we'll look at this interesting scripture together.

Father, we just thank you, and we praise you, Lord, for your word. How we thank you, as well, that when you sent Jesus in the world, it was to teach us so many, many things. And as we look this morning at some of the issues of priorities within our heart and within our life and our relationships and our understanding of them, Lord, we ask that you would open it up to us, speak to us.

For, Father, we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated.

Obviously, when Jesus came into the world, he turned it upside down or right-side up, I suppose, depending on however you want to look at it. And it wasn't only by revealing his love for us and going to the cross and his wonderful sacrificial death for us. It wasn't just his perfect and his wonderful life that was so rich and full and dynamic and watching it, as wonderful as that was.

It wasn't simply his words, his ministry, his messages of redemption, of love, of hope. It wasn't that. It was all of that, of course.

But Jesus also kind of turned the world upside down a little bit, I suppose you could say, or right-side up by his priorities. They were perfect, of course, weren't they? Anytime you look at Jesus, you can always use the word perfect. He was sinless.

So by any angle you ever want to study him, you will see perfection, whether it's of life or of person or of message or of behavior or priority. And as you look at him, I'd love to just, in this particular study we're looking at this morning, because Jesus had great priorities about his life, about the way he thought. And they were extremely practical.

So the section we're looking at here this morning gives us one of the rare insights, you might say, into Jesus and his family and people and how you might say he prioritized. I'm not much for all the different things in books you see on priorities so much. I'm just for what the Bible has to say about him.

And then I just kind of leave it that simple and don't try to complicate it with so much more. But here today in this particular text, though, you do see how and how Jesus felt about himself, how he felt about his family and the message he wanted to relate to others about those things. And as we study it, I hope that this morning we'll see very simple, very clearly.

First of all, in this text this morning, I think is a wonderful lesson on Jesus and how he looked at himself and therefore a lesson for ourselves. In verse thirty five, Jesus said, Whosoever shall do the will of the Father, the same is my brother and my sister and my mother. Here you see, obviously, and very simply, it's stated all over the Bible, all over the New Testament, that is Jesus in his priorities.

And that is that, first of all, we know about him, whosoever shall do the will of God. The very first thing about Jesus, whatever else anybody will have to think about him and wonder about him, he always did the will of God. There was nothing else upon his heart, no other priority about him whatsoever.

Doing the will of God was absolutely first with Jesus and totally non-negotiable. He had no other interest. Jesus said, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me.

In John 8 29, Jesus said, He that sent me is with me. The Father hath not left me alone. I do only always those things that please him.

The whole entire message of Jesus's life and his behavior, the first priority was simply to do the will of his Father. When he started with looking at anything else he may do, wherever he may go, whatever it is about, it was something that the criteria to decide it was always very, very simple. Is it the will of my Father? Yes or no? If it was, then you do it.

If it wasn't, then you don't. If it cost you your life to do it, you do it. Which he did.

It made no difference at all. It came down the whole issue, wasn't it, am I strong or am I weak, am I tired, am I hungry? Jesus found himself just simply going by the will of his Father every moment of every day. And sometimes it could tire him doing it.

But he always did it. And oh, what a life he lived, how rich, how full, how wonderful. When you look at Jesus, you see that he clearly knew there was nothing higher or richer or more wonderful to do in all of life than simply to do the will of his Father.

There wasn't anybody or anything or any activity that took any higher place in his heart than doing the will of the Father. He knew only too well there was no higher life to live. There was no fuller life, there was no richer, there was no more dynamic life than simply doing what his Father had for him.

When Jesus came there and looking at this world, he realized, and as you look at the world today, you realize the terrible tragedy that happens when men are set free to do what they think is good, what they think is high or rich or noble or wonderful, what they may think well to do. And that is one of the great tragedies of life, is that anytime anybody has anything that they think is higher or greater or more wonderful than the will of God, they're sadly mistaken. It's interesting, one of the things that Moses told the children of Israel back in the Old Testament when they were in the wilderness and about to go into the Promised Land, he told them, he says, you will no longer do that which you have done.

When you get into the Promised Land, you will no longer do that which you have done here. Every man that which is right in his own eyes. He told them, he said, you want to know why your life is in the wilderness, you want to know why you're in trouble, you want to know why you go around in circles again and again and you have your entire life, you want to know why you're unhappy, why you're murmuring, because you do what is right in your own eyes.

You are the master of your own destiny. You chart your own course. And every time you said that is the way you're going to live, you're going to be defeated.

It's not until somebody does not what is right in their own eyes, not necessarily even what is wrong or rebellious or stupid. It's simply anybody that even starts out and say, I'm doing what I believe is right. How many people do we know? They're in terrible trouble.

Yet at the same time, there hasn't been anything sinister about their thinking, particularly as we would look at it. Anything rebellious about their well intentioned. They want a good life and they go about it to do that which is right.

And yet it never is. And you see, we are not doing right until we're doing what is right in God's eyes, his will. And Jesus knew that better than anyone else in the world.

He knew what sorrow and suffering and agony and misery takes over a life when they do something, when they simply remove themselves from doing what God is right, says is right. But on the other hand, when you're watching Jesus and you see his life, his love, his convictions, his behavior, his message, you realize he was always right. He was always on cue.

His life was so dynamic. It was always wonderful. It was always rich.

He always was in the right place at the right time. And yet the secret of it wasn't that he did any of it. The secret of it was that he was surrendered to do the will of his father.

I go where I go because he has sent me. It's interesting that, you know, and it begins in John 4 where it says about Jesus that he must need go through Samaria. That's where he met the woman of the world.

Nobody else maybe knew why. All he knew is the father was saying go through Samaria. He finds himself going there and there he met a woman there that God knew was coming.

Lined right up at the perfect time because there was a dynamic about Jesus. I must do what my father has. That's my heart.

That's my life. That's my priority. And that's why Jesus lived.

I mean, really lived the greatest life ever dreamed of the most talked about life in all of history. The most wonderful dynamic life. It isn't the life of some industrialist or an athlete or a politician or a CEO or a musician.

The greatest life ever lived was the life there who simply had no interest in anything else other than doing the will of God. That he found that that's all that I want. And truly, his will was to do the will of his father and to live every moment of every day in his presence.

It says prophetically about Jesus in the Psalms in thy presence is the fullness of joy and thou will lead me through the path of life. They're the wonderful thing about Jesus. He knew the first and the most powerful, important priority of all is simply God that I'm in your will.

I'm in your presence. And you then will show unto me the path of life. And one of the greatest tasks, I suppose, that the Lord ever had coming into this world was one there to bring you and I to that same place, to bring your heart, my heart to the place where we honestly not only agree to that, but we surrender to that, that we believe there is no higher life than the will of God, no richer, no more, no fuller, no happier life than a life that has discovered his Lordship that says, God, you love me, you created me.

No one in all the world, including me, could even dream of a life so rich, so dynamic as the one that you've already planned for me. The Bible says if God spared not his own son for us, will he not give us all things? And the fact that Christ died for us, God gave up his son for me to pay for me, to redeem me, to call me his own. If he spared not his own son, we ought to wonder how wonderful it would be if he would pay a price like that to get me.

What is his plan for me when I'm on board with him? And the wonderful thing is that when we begin to discover that, and Jesus there, he makes no bones about it, that was not only the way he lived in that sense of doing the will of his father is the way he wants all to live. Jesus said, if any man come after me and hate not his mother, father, wife, children, yea, even his own life isn't worthy of me. Now obviously we know from the Bible Jesus never taught us to hate.

The rest of the context, but what Jesus is saying there when he says, if anybody come after me, and you have another relationship that is more important to you than following Christ, whether it be mother, father, wife, children, yea, even your own impulses, if there is anybody else that has a greater priority, a greater place in your heart, a greater ability to get you to follow them than Christ, we ought to hate that relationship, not the person, by any means, but why is it that this person has such a powerful grip on me that it is greater than God himself? What is it that has happened to me that I've given over my will to the will of a human being? And we ought to be one there that we realize Jesus said, hate the fact that there is something that is controlling you greater than the love of God, that there is some relationship that is

mastered, that no one has ever loved you like, as much as somebody may say, you need me, or you want me, or you ought to follow me, or you can't live without me, how we ought to look there and realize, I need no one greater than I need the love of Christ. I need no power, I need no wisdom, I need no hope, I need nothing more than I need him. And I'll tell you, whenever you and I are in trouble, it's usually very simple, it's because we forgot that priority.

And you go through the Bible and you find great men and great women who had great lives, but something went wrong, they forgot it. When David was in the will of God, he had a life there where no enemy could come near his tent. And he had such a victory, he had such a vitality about him, that the day that he decided to let a Bathsheba or somebody else get under his skin and get into his heart and gain a greater priority and a greater control over him, down he went.

All he had to do was take his eyes off the Lord and he was in trouble. And here is Jesus so clearly, when people are kind of trying to come and tell him what he ought to do, he lets you know in very clear, he says, I'll tell you what I do. I do the will of God.

In the text here, though, there's also another important priority to learn, I suppose, a tremendously insightful thing, I think, for us to meditate on here a little bit, and that is there's a great lesson for our loved ones, in the sense that here we have Mary, Jesus's mother, who there, you know, no doubt she is so thrilled and so excited there when Jesus was born and the angel Gabriel came and promised her that she was to be the mother of none other than the Messiah himself. And there, as she watched him grow, and as she watched his life come into its fullness, she watched his ministry begin to take off, the next thing you know, though, Jesus is out there making some claims that weren't very well accepted. Things there that when people listened to him, they had some terrible problems with, like when he would say before Abraham was, I am.

And they came to him and they gave the verse, he says, oh, I tell you, you aren't yet fifty years old and you want to tell us you've been around since before Abraham? Come now. And people were beginning to go around saying he's crazy. He's pushing himself.

He's got a great message, maybe, but the guy's going overboard. When he claimed to have placed the very stars into the sky, people began coming around and, hey, whoa, wait a minute, I mean, this guy's great and he's wonderful. But Jesus, as he begins to reveal the fact that he not only was of another world, he created the whole world.

He created it all. And as people are beginning to register what it is he is truly saying, they find themselves, as it says in verse 21, and when his friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold of him. And for they said he's beside himself.

They looked at Jesus and they said, man, he's getting too intense. He's been going too long, too hard. They found themselves there having to try to calm things down a little bit.

And so here they go and they get married. They get his half brothers and sisters. Their family to come over and to see, hey, we got to get him out of here.

He needs to rest. He needs to get his bearings back. He probably thought when he's beside himself, he's on the verge of a nervous breakdown.

What's going on here? It's interesting, though, that when they found themselves bringing the news into Jesus, he's in a house that's absolutely packed. No way anybody can get in when Mary and his brothers and sisters, half brothers and sisters show up. And so they sent a messenger inside that said, hey, please tell Jesus that his mother, his brothers and sisters are outside and we're calling for him.

And so then when the message is brought in, the ministry is interrupted. They slide him in the little note or somebody comes over and whispers in his ear, your mother and your brother are outside and they need to talk to you. Jesus then turned and says, behold, there is he looked at this whole thing, you know, who is my mother or my brethren? And here it is something to me as precious as Mary was and as wonderful as she was.

Make no mistake about it. The Bible says, blessed art thou among women, not above women, by the way, that some have chosen to do. Mary is not blessed above women, but she is truly blessed among women.

Mary had to come to Christ to save anybody away. Anybody else did in the way when the whole ministry began and Jesus had them all one hundred and twenty up in the upper room waiting for the promise of his father, waiting there for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, that they indeed would become saved and filled with the spirit of God. Mary was numbered among them.

She needed the same work as anybody and everybody else needed it. But here was something, though, that this wonderful, precious woman, as wonderful as she was, she took her eyes off the Lord himself somewhat, began to listen to the complaints, perhaps of the critics, having to intercede kind of having to, you know, as any mother knows, you know, I got to help my son here and I got to, you know, he's in trouble. And I think one of the hardest lessons sometimes a parent has to learn is when and to and when not to, when to speak and when not to speak, when to pray or when to wait.

After raising three sons, I can tell you I know very well the process, what it is to care and to love and to pray and intercede and to get involved and then to learn if you should or you shouldn't at various times. It's a difficult task. Sometimes you're right, sometimes you're wrong.

This last Thursday, Gene and I, we were out having a hamburger together and as we're walking out of the restaurant at lunchtime, we're in and out burger over here, as we're coming out, there was two ladies that were right in front of me and very intense in conversation. I just heard enough of it to hear the run was just really struggling with a teenager. And as they're walking out together and as they're talking, I just felt impressed and just stop them for a moment.

And I just, I said, excuse me, ladies, I'm not sure what you're talking about, but I did hear some words about children. And may I suggest to you something? The only hope, give them to the Lord. I didn't know if they're Christians or not, but figure, well, we'll find that out soon.

And so I just said, you got to give your children to the Lord. And with that, both of them, their eyes just lifted and they both smiled at least. And apparently at least one of my nose Christian by her response.

But there is, they just looked in and she said, what I've said to Jesus, that's exactly what we're trying to do. But the emphasis was on the trying. She, we know we're supposed to give them to the Lord.

We know they belong to the Lord. They know where they were. We know they're created by God.

And you would think when somebody is a teenager who wouldn't give them to anybody that would be willing to take them anyway. But anyway, we have such a difficult time actually doing it. She says we know we're supposed to, it's the doing stuff.

That's, I mean, she, that's the, by her emphasis, that's what we're trying to do. You can just see that struggle that so often parents have in raising their children. This is the knowing what we ought to do.

It is doing it and take comfort, ladies, because Mary had that same problem. She got involved in Jesus's life when she had no business to do it. She also did.

That was, this wasn't the only time you may recall that when Jesus, when he was 12, they went to town, went into for the Passover feast, whole family packed up, came over there in a group, a little caravan. They're all heading back together. And on the way back, they look and realize Jesus wasn't there.

Joseph and Mary get all upset and go back to town, look all over for him, find him there in the temple. And then when they find him in the temple, it says in Luke, it says, and when they saw him, they were amazed. And his mother said in him, son, why has thou dealt with us? Behold, I, father, and I have sought the sorrowing.

Oh, how often is that not the way? So I'm telling him, you know, he's, she says, why are you doing this to us? You messed up our lives. We were halfway home, you know, sort of thing. And now we got to come back and look for you.

Why are you doing this to us? Oh, you don't have to be a parent so long. You look at these kids. Why did you do this to me? You know, sometimes, sometimes.

But here is Jesus there. He looks at her. He said unto them, he says, how is it that she sought me? Wished ye not that I would be about my father's business? He looked at Mary, looked at Joseph, two people in all the world that ought to know better than anyone else.

He looked at them and he says, why in the world are you worrying about me? Wouldn't you of all people know that I would be about my father's business? And here is Jesus had to look at her. It's like, mom, mom, you ought to know this. What's your problem? Chill out.

It's in the Greek in there, by the way. Chill out. You know, he turned to her and he said, relax, mother.

But here it was something there that she had to learn it. She had to learn there to give her child to the Lord. Later on, when he was 30 and he's ministering and they're there, he said, they're actually at a wedding and they run out of wine.

There Mary runs to Jesus, tells him, hey, you can handle this. Go ahead and take care of this whole problem. Jesus looks at her and he says, woman, what have I to do with thee? He looks at her and says, wait a minute.

You've been a wonderful mom. Wonderful. But you're not my God.

He is. I do what he tells me. And I'll tell you one of the most important things I would encourage any of you that are listening today, you know, of, uh, many of you are teenagers.

One of the things that I, I suppose it's a parent's responsibility to look after and get involved and ask you certain things. But if there's one time that I believe you'll always be safe, and that is if you can look at your parents and say, I'm about the will of God, that you can look at your parents. I suppose if they're concerned about whose will you're into, is it your will, your friend's will, the world's will.

Well, they ought to check into that. But if you want to relieve a parent, when a youth can look at your, when you can look at your mom and your dad and they're saying, where have you been? What are you doing? What are you up to? There's one great answer and only one great answer. And that is when you can look at him and say, I'm doing the will of my father.

If he can't say that, they probably ought to be asking. But if they're still asking and you are about it, then to say, chill out, back off. Wouldst you know I'd be about my father's business? You dedicated me.

Don't you remember when you're, I was two years old, you took me to church, stood up in front of everybody, gave me to God. Now you took me back. Now mom, give me back to him.

I'll be fine. I think that that the great issue in life is that any of you are teenagers when there's all these things that are pulling on you and trying to reprioritize your heart and your life. The most important thing is that you can look there and say, am I about my father's business? And if I am, then I ought to be able to look at my mother and look at my father, look at others around.

Tell them what I'm doing, what I'm about. And here is Jesus, look to you, here is a lesson Mary had to learn. Give him to the Lord and then keep giving him to the Lord and then keep giving him to the Lord.

I used to think, you know, when your children get married, then you're done. I should have known better. My parents, I mean, bless their heart, they're over 50 years, they're still waiting to get done.

You know, now they've got great grandchildren, they're still praying for their children. They will get the will of God. Well, they need to.

But it's also not only a lesson in the sense of what are my priorities of my own heart, but also there as a parent to look there and realize, am I about my business of guiding my children but knowing when to back off? And that is when they're seeking God. And then it's also a tremendously important lesson to others, because it says there in verse 34 that he looked around and he on them that sat about him and he said, behold, my mother and my brethren. You know, it's interesting in Matthew, Jesus said, think not that I'm come to bring peace on the earth.

I'm not come to bring peace, but a sword. I am come to set a man at variance against his father and a daughter against her mother and the daughter in law against her mother in law. And a man's foes shall be even of his own household.

There, Jesus, he realized he wanted to tell people, he said, I tell you, if you're going to follow me and you're going to surrender to me, you need, number one, to know your own priorities. You need to also know how it is to explain, you know, your priorities to another and to lay them out clearly. There's a tremendously important lesson here is that somebody can look and he says, I want you to know that if you follow me at times, you will not even be in agreement with the people that have been closest to you and guided you much of your life.

And I think one of the greatest favors that you and I will ever be able to do for our loved ones isn't necessarily to look at them as an enemy or an obstruction by any means, but as a spiritual opportunity in life to explain to them the most important things in all the world, how we all ought to live and think, behave something there to where we ought to be able to look at the whole world around us and say, my mother and my brother are those that do the will of God. That is my family. That is my first family.

That is my highest family. That is the greatest family. We ought to be thrilled that we have family and friends and loved one that care about us, but we also ought to love them enough to make it very clear to them that we're not happy to have them merely as part of our physical family as much as we long to have them as spiritual family.

And Jesus there is having to look at his mother and his brothers. They're outside there and to tell them, he says, I'll tell you something. You want me to come out and follow you.

I'm telling you I'm not coming out, but I am inviting you to come in here and follow me. I'm not the one that wanting to give up on this family. I'm the one that wants to save it.

And when you and I know what it is to take a stand for the Lord and follow it, then we ought to do it and send a clear message. And the only way we can do that is when we understand priorities. And that is, is that I only give myself truly to people that share the same priority for the Lord.

Sometimes we need to learn the difference between fellowship and ministry. Fellowship, it's the Greek word for fellowship, they're coining it, but it means to share in common. It means to share.

In ministry though, fellowship is when you have two people that come together that have something in common to share and they share it and they enjoy it with one another. Ministry is when somebody has something, the other person does it and they go to take what they've got and to dispense it, to give it to the other person. The problem that we have is that when we seek to try to go have fellowship with somebody that we need to have ministry with.

When I became a Christian, I was in college. I didn't have any Christian friends. I was a part of a fraternity.

And I would, I didn't, so I'd go to church, but I, they were different than me. Christians, they're a little weird, still are. But it's something there that I found my friends very comfortable with.

I'd grown up with them my whole life. I had this great familiarity, fellowship with them. I'd had great fellowship for many years.

But my life was now changed. And now when I went back to my friends to have a good time with them. The only thing you can have in common is what you have in common.

The only thing you can share is what do we both have. And all we had was my past. We didn't have my presence in Christ.

We didn't have my present circumstance. We didn't have my present life. That wasn't in common.

And so because we didn't have that in common, what did we end up doing? I'd go in there wanting to say, hey, I'm going to be here. I'm going to try to be a Christian, live a good life, show them the change. And then the next thing you know, by the time the evening would wear on, I'd be in trouble.

And next thing I know, they'd drag me down and I'd be back to where I was. And more than one time, I got, somebody had to drive me home and ring the doorbell and lay me drunk on my own doorstep while I went off wanting to be Christian. I wondered what in the world is it that is going on here? And simply, I did not know that I had to take a stand.

I was looking there at what's with other things and I had to draw some lines in my life. If there are people that I'm going to have fellowship with, then I better know what we have in common and if that is truly what I want to share in common with them anymore. And how I'd encourage any of you teenagers, any of you young, or anybody, I don't care how old you are, what you do, if you go to work and you're a Christian and they're not, and you go in and find yourself spending a week in fellowship with them, you're going to be in trouble because if they don't know the Lord and you do, you don't have anything in common in heaven with them, so you'll share the earth.

You'll share the world, you'll share the humor, you'll share the attitude, you'll share the vocabulary. But when somebody realizes, no, I go to work, I go to school, I go wherever it is, I go with a consciousness. Jesus had a great clarity of when he went in, who do I give myself to? I give myself to my mother and my brother that do the will of God.

I'm not open, I'm not interested in a friendship on any other terms. Thank you very much. And until we learn that in our lives we'll be in trouble.

Until we know what it really is, so often maybe some of you literally for years you get it together kind of and you start growing spiritually, but then next thing you know you're in trouble again. Why is it that I'm back down again? You've got to redefine and draw some lines, set some priorities. If there's someone who's in Christ and share with them in common what I have, and if I don't or what we have in common is something that I do not want to have in common, then I look at them and I love them enough to have the courage to tell them and break fellowship, if that's what it need be.

And when we find ourselves having the courage, I had one, a number of guys that grew up, grammar school, high school, college, my best friends, wonderful people, but I kept on going back and down I'd go and down I'd go, in trouble until finally the Lord showed me you've got to walk away from this. You'll never be any good for them until you're strong enough to look them in the eye and tell them you're changed and until they are, their life is as wasted as yours was. And they need Christ.

I didn't have the boldness or the maturity to do it at the time, so I had to back off and go. And to wait for the opportunity, pray for the opportunity. I remember one time I got a call from a very dear friend of mine, Don, where you been? I'm in a fraternity, I'm in anywhere, what's up? And I still didn't really have the courage to tell them what was going on or how to share Christ.

I'd tried it a little bit before, but each time I'd get kidded or belittled or it wasn't received. And I'm there and I said, well, I've been busy. Well, where you been? And I said, well, I've been basically at Lake Avenue.

I went to a church that was named Lake Avenue Church. I didn't say church or anything, I just said I've been at Lake Avenue. He said, you have? I said, yeah.

And he says, why haven't you asked me? And I said, I didn't know you want to go. And he said, I'd love to go. And I said, really? And I said, well, you want to go this weekend? And he said, yes.

And I said, great. And I said, I'll pick you up about 8.30 Sunday morning. He says, 8.30 Sunday morning? What are you going to pick me up 8.30 Sunday morning for? And I said, well, it starts at 9.00. And he says, what starts at 9.00? And I said, church, Lake Avenue.

And he says, what? What are you talking about? And I said, Lake Avenue Church. And he says, oh, I thought you said Lake Havasu. No, I don't want to go.

But I'll tell you, the thing is that when his marriage got messed up later and his life fell to the bottom, the wonderful thing was is the one that he called and wanted to talk to and got an airplane and came to visit was me. Because I ended up finally having the boldness to tell him, I'll tell you who my friends are now. It's in Christ.

And he says, if I go back, I told him, if I go back here and decide I'm going to be a fun guy at the party, let's not rub along. And I'll tell you, when you and I begin to have those standards, the way our lives can change. But it begins by wanting above all else to look at Jesus and I want your priorities.

I want to be a disciple of you. I want the dynamic, rich, full, wonderful life that only you can give. How we have to want that.

Somebody once wrote a wonderful little poem or story, I am a disciple. I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. I am part of the fellowship of the unashamed.

I have Holy Spirit power. The dye has been cast. I've stepped over the line.

The love of God controls me. The decision has been made. I am a disciple of his.

I won't look back, let up, slow down or back away. My past is redeemed. My present makes sense.

My future is secure. I'm finished and I'm done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth and ease, colorless dreams, mundane talking, cheap giving and dwarfed roles. I no longer need prosperity, position, promotion, preeminence or popularity.

I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded or rewarded. I now live by faith, lean on his presence, walk in his patience, live in prayer and labor with power. My face is set.

My gate is fast. My goal is the kingdom of God. My road is narrow.

My way is rough. My companions few, my guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, diluted or delayed.

I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of adversaries, negotiate in the pool of popularity or meander in the maze of mediocrity. I won't give up, shut up, let up until I've stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, spoken up for the cause of Christ. I must go until he comes, give until I drop, teach until all know and run until he stops me.

I am a disciple of Jesus Christ. And when we look there and find there that the reason we ought to live is to realize, Lord, I want to follow you. I want your will.

But if we want it, I went back and forth for six to nine months after I gave my life to Christ. Back and forth, trying to be friends, trying to have fellowship, trying to hold all these things together and absolutely failing

until the Lord had to show me, do you want my will? Do you want to live in the will of God and are you willing to pay any price to have it? Willing to define your friends, not that you don't love the world. Not one of your friends ought to be loved anymore in all the world than by the way you love them.

I'm not saying you cease to love. Your love is so rich and so clear. It ought to be so profound when you look at them and you let them know as your eyes meet them to say, my cause is to follow Christ.

That's my family. People that look around and mushy and hang out and love one another and say, well, I'm just trying to love them to Christ, but won't draw the line. All they end up doing is walking over the line themselves back from where they're coming from because they have no distinct line to help the other come to where they are.

And when you and I find there, Lord, who am I? Who is my family? Who is my parents? Who are you? And then pay the price. That's the person that's going to make it. That's the one that's going to be able to look and simply know who is my mother and my brother, but he that doeth the will of God.

One day they'll look around and have a family so big they can't believe it. They'll have friends that are so rich and deep and other people that look at them and say, thank you that you were strong enough and you love me enough to tell me the truth. I didn't want to hear it.

I didn't know how to live it. May God strengthen us and give us the courage to be able to see it as clearly as Jesus. I simply do the will of my Father.

I won't step down from it. It's too wonderful to leave. Father, how we thank you for your word.

How we thank you for your love and we ask that you would just work within us, Lord. Maybe some of us today we're having fellowship with people that drag us down. We get in trouble.

Our lives are weak as a result. We go to work. We go to school.

We're in trouble. Maybe some of us that are our parents come to us and want to know what we're up to and our answer isn't good. We can't look at them and say, I'm about the will of my Father.

And if we can't say that, maybe we need to have them ask us. But Lord, as parents as well, that we know the time to look at our children and say, I'm going to let you and the Lord work this out. It's between you and him.

I've raised you and I've loved you. But I'm weaning you of me and over to him that he can speak to you. And Lord, that by that faith that we would learn to entrust each other to the will of God.

Whatever the lesson as we look at our text today, may you teach us and strengthen us and enable us. For Father, we ask it in Jesus name. Amen.

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