

The Call of Discipleship

by Israel Wayne

The call of discipleship is a fundamental aspect of being a Christian, requiring obedience, following Jesus' example, and learning from his teachings.

Duration: 54:27

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 25:35-36, Mark 1:14-18, Mark 1:35, Mark 1:38, James 2:15-16

Topics: "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker begins by expressing his desire to have a funny story about chartering an airplane, but quickly transitions to discussing the call of discipleship. He reads a passage from Mark's Gospel about Jesus calling his disciples and emphasizes the importance of following Jesus and being obedient to him. The speaker then provides necessary steps for being effective as followers of Christ, including developing spiritual disciplines and being committed to spending time with God. He emphasizes that being a disciple is foundational to being useful in God's kingdom and encourages listeners to take this message seriously as it undergirds the rest of the conference.

Transcript

Well, it's a blessing to be able to be back. I had an opportunity to meet many of you last year at the conference, and we're very blessed to be able to participate again this year. I don't know about you.

I've certainly enjoyed the conference so far and certainly was blessed last night. I don't think I could have had a better warm-up or introduction to this message than what Ryan Dobson gave last night. It led in perfectly to what I'm going to share.

I was thinking last night I really wanted to try to find an airplane that I could charter last night so I could jump out and have a funny story to tell you this morning, but it's hard to coordinate that on such short notice, and so no airplane stories for you. But I want to start this morning this message, the call of discipleship, by reading to you a passage from Mark's gospel, the gospel according to Mark, chapter one, verse fourteen through twenty. And this is the call of Jesus to his disciples.

And it says, Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent ye and believe the gospel. Now as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishers.

And Jesus said unto them, Come ye after me, and I will make you to become fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets and followed him. Let us pray.

God our Father, we thank you that you have given us the opportunity to be your followers. You've given us the opportunity to be your disciples. I thank you, Lord Jesus, that you have extended to each one of us the call to follow you.

I pray that you would help our hearts to be open and attentive this morning. I pray that you would speak your words, words of truth, words of life. And may we respond appropriately.

We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen. This message this morning is for anyone who is a follower of Jesus Christ.

It's for anyone who wants to be obedient to Christ. It's for anyone who desires to be a worker in the kingdom. For anyone who desires to be a leader.

For anyone who wants to see America turn back to God. For anyone who wants to see the kingdom of God advanced. I'm going to give you in this message some very necessary and important steps to being effective in your life as followers.

Without implementing these principles, I can assure you that you will not be successful from a biblical standpoint. Following these principles will ensure that your life is filled with meaning, with purpose, with adventure, like Ryan talked about last night. And I would like for this message to undergird the other messages that you're going to hear throughout the rest of this conference.

This is a very foundational message. And if you miss this message, if you think, oh, I don't really need to know about discipleship and you sort of gloss over that and you move on to the next point, you're missing something very fundamental. This is the foundation on which we build much of what you're going to hear for the rest of the conference.

There's a foundational law in the kingdom of God. And that foundational law is that before you can be useful in God's kingdom, you have to be a disciple. Now, what does it mean to be a disciple? When you look in the New Testament, the Greek word that's used most often for the word disciple is my ages.

And this is a word that means a learner or a pupil. There's also another word that's used in its month that you owe, and this word means to enroll as a scholar. Webster's 1828 dictionary defines the word disciple this way.

A follower in adherence to the doctrines of another. Hence, the constant attendance of Christ were called his disciples, and hence all Christians are called his disciples. As they profess to learn and receive his doctrines and precepts.

Now, for those of you who are a little surprised that that came out of a dictionary. If you don't own a copy of Webster's 1828 dictionary, please talk to David Barrett, because you need to get one. Noah Webster was a man who had a biblical worldview and his dictionary represents a and presents definitions from a biblical worldview.

Very important resource for families. Now, those terms that we've looked at a learner, a pupil, scholar. The one that I think I like is the one that Webster provides for us here, which is the word follower, particularly

as it relates to being a disciple of Jesus Christ.

And the reason is because Jesus, as a teacher, as a rabbi, was not like the traditional Greek teachers. He was not like those who taught in the Socratic schools. He was a very different kind of rabbi.

He was a teacher on the move. His disciples literally had to follow Jesus. Jesus kept them on their toes, so to speak.

They never knew exactly where Jesus was going to go that day and what he was going to do. He didn't give them an itinerary schedule for the summer and say, these are the cities that I'll be in on these days. And, you know, the city I'll be doing these miraculous works and healing these people and casting out demons in this town and, you know, preaching over in this synagogue.

No, he didn't do that every day. They had to sort of get up and find out where is Jesus going to go today? And they had to literally follow him. And another thing that's different about Jesus as a teacher is that he didn't merely tell you what you should know or he didn't merely tell you what you should do.

He showed you how to do it. Which is, of course, what discipling really is. It's the essence of discipling.

You know, I remember when I first became a parent, my oldest son, Benjamin, was born and he was just a baby. And I was thinking about how am I going to train and teach this child? And I had been home educated. And so I knew quite a bit about biblical principles.

And my idea of training a child was sort of this, that you teach your children all of these biblical principles and character traits and so on and so forth. And then when they grow up, they become a composite of all of these ideas and principles and character traits that you've taught them. I don't know where I got that idea.

I think it's a common homeschooling misconception perhaps. And I remember one day I was praying and the Lord sort of spoke to my heart and showed me that my son was not going to be a composite of all the things that I taught him. What I felt like the Lord showed me was that my son was most likely going to be just like me.

And that scared me. Because I didn't want my son to be like me. I wanted my son to be a composite of all the things I taught him.

And it dawned on me that if I want my son to be honest, I have to be honest. If I want my son to know how to love his wife, I have to love my wife. If I want my son to know how to be self-controlled and how to abstain from anger, I have to do that.

And really that is the essence of discipleship. Jesus said, a teacher is not above, I'm sorry, a student is not above his teacher. But when he's fully trained, that student will be as his teacher, will be like unto his teacher.

That's really the nature of discipleship, is the student, the learner, the follower, learning to become like the teacher. That's Christian discipleship. I want to cover a couple of rules related to this concept of discipleship.

Rule number one is we must follow. If you're going to be a disciple, you have to follow Jesus. Being a disciple is not merely memorizing creeds and confessions.

Being a disciple is following. It's more than that, it's more than what you have up here. You have to follow Jesus.

Rule number two, we must obey. This is so foundational. And honestly, it bothers me that I travel to so many churches that don't have the word obedience in their vocabulary.

It's a biblical word. In fact, obedience is foundational. It's fundamental to being a Christian.

You cannot be a Christian if you don't obey. You can't. You know, one of the things that became clear to me recently as I was reading, actually I was reading this book again, *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

This is an awesome book. If you've never read it, get it, buy it, read it. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, as you may know, was a German pastor who was calling the German church back to holiness as Hitler was rising to power.

And the church in Germany was becoming more and more liberal. And the doctrine of cheap grace had come in. And Bonhoeffer was trying to call people back to biblical discipleship.

And one of the things he points out in the book is that the very call of Jesus to his disciples, Come and follow me, was in and of itself a command. I never thought of it like that. I guess I'd always thought of it like Jesus asked them, You know, would you please come and follow me? No.

He spoke to them and he said, come and follow me. Even the call to be a follower was obligatory. You know, when the maker of the universe, the one who created everything, the one who sustains everything, the one that made you by whom and through whom and for whom you exist and live and move and have your being.

When that person calls you and says, come and follow me. There's only one appropriate answer to say no, which some did. You remember the disciples who said, well, first, let me go and bury my father or let me go and take care of this obligation or that obligation.

There were those who tried to give Jesus terms by which they would come to him. But to say no to Jesus and his call to follow his command to follow is to ensure your eternal damnation. Outside of saying yes to the call of Jesus and dropping everything immediately, instantly and getting up and going simply because of who he is.

Simply because it's Jesus who calls. Anything outside of that means you're lost, hopelessly, helplessly lost. There's no other option.

Bonhoeffer explains this about the calling of Matthew in his book, *The Cost of Discipleship*. The call goes forth and is at once followed by the response of obedience. How could the call evoke immediate obedience? Do you ever wonder that? I mean, here they are in the middle of their workday and they just drop everything and leave.

For the simple reason, how can the call evoke immediate obedience? For the simple reason that the cause behind the immediate following of call by response is Jesus Christ himself. It is Jesus who calls and because it is Jesus, the disciple follows at once. This encounter is a testimony to the absolute, direct and unaccountable authority of Jesus.

There is no need of any preliminaries and no other consequence but obedience to the call. Because Jesus is the Christ, he has the authority to call and to demand obedience to his word. Jesus summons men to follow, not as a teacher or as a pattern of the good life, but as the Christ, the Son of God.

In this short text, Jesus Christ and his claim are proclaimed to men. Not a word of praise is given to the disciple for his decision. We are not expected to contemplate the disciple, but only him who calls and his absolute authority.

According to our text, there is no other road to faith and discipleship, only obedience to the call of Jesus. And what does the text inform us about the content of discipleship? Follow me, run along behind me. That is all.

That's staggering. Rule number three, we must learn. I want to look at the profile of a follower this morning.

I want to look at one of Jesus' followers. And the reason I'm going to pick this particular guy is because I identify with him so well. He's so human.

I'm thinking of Peter. I love the apostle Peter. You know, if Peter were a child in a government school today, he would be so doped up on Ritalin, he couldn't think.

I mean, he was ADHD. I mean, you know, the guy's like, oh, there's Jesus. Well, you know, he gets out of the boat.

You know, I love that about him. He's just so impulsive. He's so spontaneous.

He's never at a loss for words. You know, I love it. The transfiguration.

It's like, Lord, you know, it's good that we're here. You know, we ought to really build you some tabernacles. And then, you know, and I love the little side note that's in there.

It's like he has no clue what he's talking about. You know, he's just. But anyway, I'm going to look at Peter primarily in the gospel, according to Mark, because Mark was a personal friend of Peter.

In fact, in First Peter 5:13, the apostle Peter calls John Mark his son. They had that kind of a relationship. And if you remember, in Acts 12:12, when Jesus had been or when Peter had been arrested and he was in prison and the angel came and delivered him, he went to a prayer meeting at the house of John Mark's mother.

The gospel, according to Mark, most scholars say that it was influenced very much by Peter's testimony. So there's a lot of behind the scenes shots, I think, into the personality of the apostle Peter. And I want to look at some of the lessons that Peter had to learn as a disciple, as a follower of Jesus Christ.

Well, the first lesson that he learns is Jesus goes to his mother-in-law's house and his mother-in-law is sick. And before Jesus does anything else, he heals his mother-in-law. I think the lesson that's learned there, lesson number one, is that you care for the physical needs of the person first.

You see this in James 2, 15 through 17. It says, if a brother or sister be naked and destitute of daily food and one of you say unto them, depart in peace, be warmed and filled. Notwithstanding, you give them not those things which are needful to the body.

What does it profit? Even so, faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. As a disciple or a follower of Jesus Christ, we're going to become like him. That's something that we need to learn in how we relate to people.

We can't just look at it like our only obligation to these people is to tell them that they're sinners and that they need to be saved. You know what I mean? There's a sense in which we have to work as Jesus did and realize that people have physical needs. And if someone is laying sick and they need help, look after that first.

It builds a platform where it bridges a gap where you have earned the respect of that person and you can share with them at that point. That was lesson number one that Peter had to learn. Care for physical needs first.

Let's look at Mark, chapter one, verse 35 through 39. This is right after this story about Peter's mother-in-law. And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, Jesus went out and departed into a solitary place and there prayed.

And Simon and they that were with him followed after him. And when they found him, they said unto him, All men seek for thee. Now it's easy to read the Bible and just read it.

You know, you can be doing your morning Bible reading and you read something like that. And you can just pass over that and not really think about what happened. There's a lot that happened here.

Get the mental picture. The disciples wake up. What do they wake up to? There's a crowd of people.

And who do they want to see? Jesus. They're demanding to see Jesus. We want to talk to this guy.

Where's Jesus? Well, the disciples, you know, they're waking up and they're rubbing their eyes and they're looking around. Where is he? I don't know. Well, I like this.

It says here, And Simon and they that were with him. You get the picture that Simon's like, Let's find him. And off he goes.

You know, he takes off and he's out in the lead way out in front of all the and those that followed him. You know, and he's going to find Jesus. OK, and he finds Jesus and he comes up doing any, you know, probably interrupted the Lord when he's praying.

And he says, All men seek you. There's a whole crowd of people down there. I mean, I just cringe sometimes when I think of Pete, I guess, because I can picture myself doing it.

You know, it's like you just feel so bad for the guy, you know, and here's here's the lesson that Jesus was teaching them again by example. And lesson number two is realize your need for quiet time with the Lord. You know, here's the master.

What kind of example is he setting for them? Is he setting an example that the first thing when you get up in the morning is you start thinking about your people. You have an obligation to the public. You know, the press is out there and they want a statement.

No, he gets away early. So in the morning, rising up a great while before day, he went out and departed to a solitary place and prayed. Do you think Jesus had his priorities in order? Do you think Peter had his

priorities in order? No.

And yet Peter thinks so much the way we do. Look, there's a press conference down there. Come on, you got to go make a statement.

People are looking for you. And I love how Jesus answers this. Jesus says in verse 38.

Let us go into the next towns that I may preach there also. For therefore came I forth and he preached in their synagogues throughout all Galilee and cast out devils. Did Jesus not hear Peter? Did he not hear about the all men seek thee part? It's like he got ignored.

Well, why? Well, Jesus got his orders already. He knew his direction for the day and it had nothing to do with those people. Here's what I think lesson number three might be.

Learn to serve outside of your little group. Learn to serve outside of your little group. There's a fundamental flaw in Peter's character that he liked.

You know, they say birds of a feather flock together. Peter liked to be around people who were just like him. It lasted, I think, almost through his whole life.

But Jesus was saying, look, we can't just stay with this one group. Stay with this one crowd and just continue to minister to them. There's other people that we have to go to.

For this reason, I've been called, he says. Now, Peter had struggles with this. He didn't learn this lesson when he should have from Jesus.

And if he would have learned it from Jesus, it might have saved him a very embarrassing public rebuke from the apostle Paul. Do you remember the men from James come down and Peter, who had been associating with the Gentiles? Suddenly it's, you know, the like minded brethren come in and all of a sudden he's hanging with the like minded brethren. And he forgets all about the Gentiles.

He's kind of snubbing them. Why? Because he had this propensity to want to be with his own little group. And I think Jesus was trying to get him to think in terms of the fact that there are other people who need ministry who aren't necessarily in your little circle.

You know, if your focus has been local, maybe you need to turn your focus to the next town over. Maybe you need to turn your focus to some other people groups that you particularly maybe wouldn't be drawn to. Let's look at Mark chapter eight, beginning in verse twenty seven.

We see what's called here Peter's confession. And it says, And Jesus went out and his disciples into the towns of Caesarea Philippi. And by the way, he asked his disciples, saying unto them, whom do men say that I am? And they answered John the Baptist.

But some say Elijah and others, one of the prophets. And he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto him, Thou art the Christ or the Messiah or the anointed one. And he charged them that they should tell no man of him.

Now in Mark's gospel, which is directly influenced by Peter's testimony, there seems to be no reference of Jesus's response to Peter affirming what he had said. His declaration of who Jesus was, of his being the Messiah. So we have to look to Matthew, the gospel according to Matthew, another disciple to get another

disciple to include the words that Jesus said affirming Peter.

Apparently Peter didn't, this was, you know, the gospel according to Matthew was written later in life after Peter had grown up and matured a lot, and he didn't apparently want to boast about himself. That's all I can figure. But in Matthew 16, 15 through 20, he saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, which means son of Jonah. And, you know, I don't know about you. When I read the Bible, I get funny mental pictures.

And, you know, I don't know if your dad's name is Jonah. Does it mean that you have to have an occupation with fish? I don't know. But anyway, so he's the Simon, son of Jonah for flesh and blood.

Blessed are you for flesh and blood did not reveal it unto thee, but my father, which is in heaven. And I say unto thee that thou art Peter. And upon this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. And whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

Then he charged he his disciples that they should tell no man that he was Jesus the Christ. So upon this confessional proclamation of who Jesus was, Peter was commended for his excellent Christology. I mean, I think that would do something to your head personally.

I mean, if Jesus gave you a commendation of that magnitude. The problem was that Peter didn't see the whole picture. Because right after this, in verse 31 of Mark 8. And Jesus began to teach them that the son of man must suffer many things.

And be rejected of the elders and of the chief priests and of the scribes and be killed. And after three days rise again. And he spake that openly and Peter took him and began to rebuke him.

Hello? It's a scary situation when your theology is so important to you. That you would rebuke the Lord. And there's a reason why Peter didn't like this particular brand of teaching by Jesus.

It's because it didn't fit into his world view. Because see, Peter had a world view of the Messiah being the great deliverer. You know, his view of the Messiah was, this is all about ruling and reigning.

This is about triumph and dominion. About crowns and thrones and judgments and sitting at the right hand and calling fire from heaven. You know, Peter was into that, man.

But when Jesus started talking about how he would be rejected. How he would be killed. How he would suffer many things.

Well, that made Peter uncomfortable. Because I'm sure in the back of Peter's mind, he's remembering some of the other things that Jesus taught him. Like, a student is not above his teacher.

If they hate me, they're going to hate you. Surely he remembered some of these teachings. And he understood what it meant that if I do this, you have to do this.

And Peter's saying, not me. But he doesn't want to say, not me. So he says, not you.

He thinks that Jesus is a little fuzzy in his theology. He's got to give him some exegetical help. It's a scary situation when your theology has become so deeply embedded in you.

That you forget that you're not God. And you don't know it all. You're human.

And you could be wrong. And here's what happened. Jesus rebuked him.

Jesus said to him, what you're thinking is not what I'm thinking. He said to him, get behind me, Satan. For thou savorest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

Now think about the height of just a few minutes before. Of him saying, blessed are you, Simon. Flesh and blood didn't reveal this to you.

My father in heaven. Now he's saying, get behind me, Satan. Now the reason for this, again, is I think that Peter, two things.

That Peter, number one, thought his theology was right. He thought he had it all figured out. He had nothing else to learn.

And that would be my point, lesson number four, I think. Never stop learning. Never think you know it all.

Even if you're a pastor. Even if you're a conference speaker. Even if you're a world view expert.

Even if you publish a national homeschooling magazine. Don't think you've got it all figured out. You're a follower.

Even if you're a teacher of others. You're a follower. Never forget that.

That's lesson number four. But the other reason that I think that Peter didn't like this theology is because it talked about suffering. And suffering and death did not fit into Peter's world view.

Then Jesus taught them a very straightforward instruction about what it means to be a disciple. When you hear what I'm about to read, realize that this is not debatable. It's not subject to alternate interpretation.

This is what Francis Schaeffer called true truth. Truth that is true for all people in all places and all times. Jesus says this.

He called the people with him and he called his disciples and he said unto them, Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever shall save his life shall lose it. But whosoever.

What does the word whosoever mean? Does that mean some people? No. It means everyone. Whosoever will lose his life for my sake and the gospels, the same shall save it.

For what shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever, therefore, who shall be ashamed of me and my words and this adulterous and sinful generation of him also shall the son of man be ashamed when he cometh in the glory of his father and with the holy angels. And then in John 12, Jesus expanded on this teaching and he said, Verily, verily, I say unto you, accept a grain of wheat, fall into the ground and die. It abideth alone, but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit.

He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it into life eternal. If any man serve me, let him follow me. And where I am, there shall also my servant be.

If any man serve me, him will my father honor. Lesson number five. True life only comes out of death.

Whether we like it or not, Jesus taught that we must deny ourselves. Do you know what denying yourself means? It means that every now and again, it's okay to tell yourself no. It's even okay to deny your children sometimes and to tell them no.

Now, that's free. That wasn't even in my notes. That's just totally free.

But it's mandatory, actually, that we deny ourselves and say no to certain things. That's not American. That's definitely not American, but it's biblical.

There's no room in the kingdom of God for selfish ambition. There's no room in the kingdom of God for those who won't die to their own aspirations and their own desires, who won't seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness. C.S. Lewis said, if anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step.

The first step is to realize that one is proud. If you think you're not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed. Jonathan Edwards said, a truly humble man is sensible of his natural distance from God and his own dependence on Him, of the insufficiency of his own power and wisdom.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer wrote this, the cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christian suffering which everyone must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of the world. It is the dying of the old man, which is his encounter with Christ.

When Christ calls a man, He bids him to come and die. Only the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ. In fact, every call of Jesus is a call to die with all our affections and lusts.

We, like Peter, have a very difficult time overcoming our flesh. One thing Peter did, he wanted to overcome his self-will. And so he self-willed to overcome his self-will.

It's a big mistake. You can't do it. Romans 8.13 tells us that if you live after the flesh, you will die.

Through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body. How do you mortify that self-will, that flesh, that desire to do my own thing? How do you kill that? Through the Spirit. If you mortify the deeds of the body through the Spirit, you will live.

Lesson number six, the way to overcome the flesh is to learn to walk in the Spirit. Galatians 5.16 says, this I say then, walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh. You know, for many years in my life, I tried to overcome things in my life that I knew weren't pleasing to God by willing, by trying harder, by thinking, OK, I have to really work hard to stop doing this.

And what I would do is I would focus on all these problems that I had, all these issues in my life that I knew were not God honoring. And I would focus on these issues and try to solve all these little problems that I had. It never worked.

And I was frustrated. I didn't understand why it didn't work, that the harder I tried, the more I failed. And then I found this principle, that the way that you don't walk in the flesh is not by trying harder not to walk in

the flesh, it's by learning to walk in the Spirit.

When you walk in communion with God, when you walk in the Spirit, when you learn to be obedient, when you submit yourself, when you humble yourself under God's mighty hand, then He lifts you up. You find that you're not walking in the flesh. You're not fulfilling the lusts of the flesh.

Isn't that what Galatians 5 tells us? You have the list of the fruit of the Spirit and you have the list of the works of the flesh. It's by being surrendered and broken to God so that His Holy Spirit has Lordship in our life. That is how we overcome the flesh, not by working on our flesh.

Does that make sense? Okay, let's look at the next lesson. This is Mark 14. Jesus said unto them, And ye shall all be offended because of me this night, for it is written, I shall smite the shepherd and the sheep shall be scattered.

But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee. But Peter said unto him, Although all shall be offended, yet will not I. And Jesus saith unto him, And verily I say unto thee, that this day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny me three times. But he spake them more vehemently, If I should die with thee, I will not deny thee in any wise.

Likewise said they all. And they came to a place which was called Gethsemane. And he saith to his disciples, Sit ye here while I shall pray.

Lesson number seven, Is if you refuse to die daily, And I believe that the primary context in which Christ calls us to die daily, Is in our home, with our family. If you refuse to die daily, You won't be able to die for Christ when there's a gun at your head. I promise you.

You know, we like to think that when the big moment comes, you know, And it's our moment to die for, We'll rise to the challenge. You know, when that Al Zarqawi guy says, Renounce your religion or I cut your head off. We say, Oh, I'll never renounce my religion.

We like to think that, like Peter. Oh, even if everybody else will deny you, I'll never deny you. Well, on a bet, I'll tell you why that's not true.

Because if you have not developed the daily discipline, As Jesus said, dying daily. If you haven't developed that ability, And you can't die to your flesh, your self-will, When your wife asks you to take out the trash. If you can't die to your self-will when your children wake up cranky, And you're supposed to make them breakfast and they throw it on the floor.

And you can't love them, And be a godly mother to them. If you can't love your husband when he comes and tracks mud in on the carpet. If you can't die to your flesh daily, In something simple, like loving your family.

You won't stand for Jesus when there's a gun at your head. You just won't. And that's why Jesus told us that we have to die daily.

If you can't die daily, You won't be able to do it when the time really counts. Following in Mark 14. He said unto Peter, the boaster, Simon, sleepest thou? Oh, that hurts.

Do you think Peter woke up and, you know, I don't know, He probably was so full of himself, he didn't even remember how much he'd been boasting. Couldst thou not watch even one hour? How dead to his flesh

was this guy? I'm not picking on Peter, by the way. I mean, that's me.

Watch ye, and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The Spirit is truly ready, but the flesh is weak. And he went and turned away.

He went again, and he prayed, and he spoke the same words. And when he returned, he found them asleep again. For their eyes were heavy.

Neither knew they what to answer him. I'm sure. I'm sure they didn't.

And he cometh the third time, and he saith unto them, Sleep on now, take your rest. It is enough. The hour is come.

Behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise up, let us go. He that betrayeth me is at hand.

Lesson eight. If you don't develop spiritual disciplines in your life, when the going is easy, you will not suddenly walk in the Spirit when the going gets tough. It's harder when the going is tough.

If you can't discipline yourself to get up and have a daily time with your Heavenly Father, if you can't do that when it's easy, you're not going to be able to do it ever under any circumstances. And you may say, well, you don't know my schedule. You don't know how hard it is.

Well, you don't know my schedule. You don't know how hard it is for me. You know, by the grace of God, I make it an endeavor to spend two hours every morning with the Lord.

That's hard. Leonard Ravenhill said that any preacher who won't spend two hours in prayer a day isn't worth ten cents to the Kingdom of God, degrees or no degrees. Now, that might be overstating it a bit, but how many of us, even in Christian leadership, spend two hours a week in prayer? Two hours a month? The point stands.

If we really are going to be effective in the Kingdom of God, we have to develop spiritual disciplines. It won't get easier. Your life is not going to get simpler.

You know, if you tell yourself, well, when things slow down... Have you ever said that? When things slow down? When did they slow down? They don't. I mean, I don't know. It's just the law of the universe.

It's some law of physics, right? The law of acceleration. It's constant motion. And what was the result of this? That they had not developed that spiritual discipline.

Jesus had that discipline, and when it counted in the Garden of Gethsemane, he was ready, because he developed that discipline daily of being with the Father, even when he was tired, even when it was hard. The disciples had not. And it says in verse 50, And they all forsook him and fled.

You know, the Barretts are involved in running track. And I was talking with Josiah, and Josiah runs six miles a day. And I would like to think that I could run six miles if I really had to.

I mean, you know, I'm walking down the sidewalk, and all of a sudden, here comes a Doberman, full throttle behind me. I would like to think that I could outlast that dog and make it six miles. There's a little problem, though, and that is that I don't run daily like Josiah does.

I think what would happen is I would get about a half a mile, and I would croak, and I would lay there and be totally passed out on the sidewalk, because if you don't develop the daily discipline, you can't pull it out when you need to do the six-mile run. And that's what happened to the disciples in Gethsemane. And yet, our Lord, our Teacher, had developed that daily discipline, and when it counted, eternity was ready.

Okay, now for the next lesson. Then Simon Peter, having a sword, drew it. And Simon's never, you know, it's like, something needs to be done.

Takes out the sword. Whacks off Malchus's ear. You know? He flunked the test of praying like Jesus told him to in the garden, so he's going to make up for it.

Okay, lesson number nine. Jesus said, put your sword away. Shouldn't I drink the cup that the Father's given me? You can't make up for a spiritual lack in your life with a double dose of your flesh.

Can't do it. I have tried. I've tried.

You know, I've had weeks in my life where I got busy, and I didn't crack my Bible. And I didn't pray, except at meals. And then, I'll be attending a church somewhere, and someone will say, you know what, we have... Pastors don't do this, Pastor Katz.

You know what? We have a guest. Israel, why don't you come up and share what the Lord's put on your heart? Just 15 minutes. I had this happen to me in Nashville at a church.

Just 15 minutes, and share what God's doing in your life. I had a friend who used to call me, and he'd say, how you doing, brother? I'd say, doing great. How you doing with the Lord? I'd say, great.

He'd say, what did the Lord show you in His Word this morning? Oh, and I'm trying to think of some verse I memorized in VBS. Always that John 14, 6, you know, on the way of the truth of life, that just means a lot to me. You know, you can't make up for a spiritual lack in your life by a double dose of the flesh.

Just saying, well, I'll just somehow do it in my own strength. It doesn't work. Let me give you two examples of people who tried this.

Number one is Samson. Samson had a spiritual gifting from God, an empowerment from God. But yet in Judges 16, 20, it says, and she said, the Philistines be upon thee, Samson.

And he woke up out of his sleep, and he said, I'll go out, as at other times before, and shake myself. And he knew not that the Lord had departed from him. The other guy was Saul, King Saul.

Samuel said in 1 Samuel 15, 17, When thou wast little in thine own sight, wast thou not made head over the tribes of Israel? And the Lord anointed the king over Israel? And then in verse 22, Samuel says, Does the Lord have as much delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices as in obeying the voice of the Lord? It's better to obey than to sacrifice. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he also has rejected you from being king. And Saul said unto Samuel, Okay, okay.

Alright, I sinned. I blew it. I messed up.

I was afraid of the people. I listened to them. But, you know, make me look good, basically is what he's going to say.

Make me look good in front of the people. Don't let them see that I haven't really been what I should be. Can you cover me here? I know I'm not where I'm supposed to be spiritually, but can we fake it this time? And Samuel says, I will not return with you, for the Lord has rejected You've rejected the word of the Lord, and the Lord has rejected you from being king over Israel.

And as Samuel turned to go away, Saul laid ahold of the skirt of his mantle and it rent. And Samuel said unto him, The Lord hath rent the kingdom of Israel from thee this day, and hath given it to a neighbor of thine that is better than thou. Now here's something I want to say to those of you who are leaders.

Those of you who serve in some kind of leadership capacity within the kingdom. This is rule number 10. You can be replaced.

The Lord reminds me of that every so often. He says, you know what, Israel? You can be replaced. I can find somebody else to do the work.

The work will get done with you or without you. I don't need your help. And if you won't be submitted to me, if you won't be broken before me, if you won't allow yourself to be a lump of clay in my hands and do whatever I tell you to do, I'll find somebody else.

The work will go on. The message will go forth. It just won't be you doing it.

It's a fearful thing to stand in a place of authority speaking for God. It's something that we should do with fear and trembling. Let me close.

I want to tell you that even if you as a disciple have tripped up, even if you've blown it, even if you've failed, even if you have fallen very short of where you need to be, and you know that you've not pleased the Master, and you know that you don't have the blessing of the Lord smiling on your life, I want to tell you that if there's anything that I know about God, if there's anything I know about Him, it's that He's a merciful God. He's slow to anger. He's quick to restore.

If there's anything I know about God, it's the restorative mercy of God. How He longs to give us what we don't deserve. Even if you've blown it, and think about how Peter blew it.

He had seen Jesus walk on the water. Peter himself had walked on the water. His mother-in-law had been healed.

He'd been at the transfiguration. He'd seen people healed. He'd seen people raised from the dead.

This is the same Lord that called him away from fishing, that said, I'll make you a fisher of men. The close personal fellowship that Peter and Jesus had, Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends, and yet when the pressure was on, he buckled under the pressure, and he said, I don't even know the man. He swore, he cursed, even to a lowly servant girl, and said, I don't know him.

And then the cock crowed, and he realized what he had done, and it must have shattered him. It must have absolutely shattered Peter to know how much he had broken the heart of his master. He must have thought, I can never be forgiven.

I can never be restored. God will never forgive me for what I've done. Have you felt like that before? I have.

You know intellectually that God will forgive you, but you don't feel it. So what did Peter do? Even after everything he'd experienced, even after all he'd gone through with God, he went back to fishing. He went back to what he knew.

He went back to relying on his own strength. Oh, what an anchor that is that holds us down, that self-will, that self-reliance in our life. I've got to do it myself.

And yet, Jesus sought after him. And three times, once for each time that Peter denied him, he restored him. And in John 21, 17 through 19, he says this, He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonah, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things, thou knowest that I love thee.

Jesus said unto him, feed my sheep. Verily, verily, I say unto thee, when thou wast young, thou dressed yourself, you walked wherever you went, but when you're old, you'll stretch forth your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you would not go. He spoke this signifying what kind of death he would die to the glory of God.

And when he had spoken this, he said unto him, follow me. The call had come full circle. That's the restorative mercy of our God.

Church history tells us that Peter was faithful to the call. But at the end of his life, they dressed him, they took him where he would not go. And they said, you're going to be crucified.

And he said, I'm not worthy to be crucified as my Lord. He said, allow me to be crucified upside down. He had become so broken, so surrendered to God and had died to his own will daily.

He had done that so that when the time came that it was time to give his all, he was ready. We can be also. The call of God is going out to some of you today.

Today, when you hear his voice, don't harden your hearts, but seek him while he may be found. And answer the call of the discipleship. I can guarantee you there's no greater experience on earth than to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

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