

The Discipline of Discipleship - 1

by Jack Hibbs

The sermon emphasizes the importance of discipleship in the Christian faith, highlighting the need for conversion, the dangers of legalism, and the importance of following Jesus.

Duration: 1:16:16

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, Galatians 5:22-23, Ephesians 5:15-16, Philippians 4:13, James 1:22

Topics: "Discipline"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher introduces a new series called 'The Disciplines of Life' which will span over 31 weeks. The purpose of this series is to explore the disciplines of being a Christian and how they can transform every aspect of our lives. The preacher encourages the congregation to invite their Christian friends and family members to join them on Wednesday nights for these teachings. The sermon emphasizes the importance of allowing the Holy Spirit to work in our lives and to be actively engaged in our Father's business.

Transcript

I ask Lord that you would just go before us now and Father that you would do in our hearts over the course of these next 31 weeks an amazing thing. Lord, we have come here tonight because we are hungering for you. And so Father, tonight we pray that you would work a work in us that cannot be bought, it can't be traded for, it can't be achieved, it cannot be gotten any other way than sitting at your feet.

Lord, it is an awesome thing to realize that if we let the Holy Spirit free in our lives on these Wednesday nights to think how you want to change us. And Lord, it's time for us to put on our big shoes and our big pants and our big shirts and do the big job. And that is so that we would be filled with your Spirit and that we'd be busy about our Father's business.

So Lord, bless this series now that we begin tonight, The Disciplines of Life. Let us, Lord, embrace them. In Jesus' name and all God's people said, Amen.

Church, listen, here we go on a Wednesday night, a brand new series, The Disciplines of Life. And as I mentioned, 31 weeks in this series that I guarantee you will be life changing. I'm going to ask all of you to invite Christian friends and family members to Wednesday nights and consider them as a classroom setting, so to speak.

We are going to be talking about the disciplines of being a Christian. What are they? And each week, as we gather together, we're going to go through some things that you will not only, of course, apply to your Christianity, but they are things that will absolutely, listen, absolutely change your life and all areas of your life. If you're a student, it's going to make you a better student.

If you're a worker, if you are unemployed, if you are whatever, it's going to strengthen you in the inner fiber of who you are as a Christian. It's going to be great. I have longed for this series, very, very excited about it.

Well, listen, I want you to grab your Bibles tonight and turn, if you would, to Matthew chapter 16, verse 24, Matthew 16, 24, as we kick it off in our first topic in the disciplines of life series. Our first one is going to be this, the disciplines of discipleship. And what does it mean? Boy, I tell you, if you are a new believer in here tonight, this is exactly what you need to hear.

Listen, if you are a seasoned saint, you need to be reminded of these things. And I tell you what, for one, I'm very excited about what's going on, the disciplines of discipleship. Matthew chapter 16, verse 24.

Jesus said to his disciples, if anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. I want to take a little bit of a methodical approach to that verse. And then we're going to go into our study tonight.

So this is introduction. It's very important. If you're taking tonight, jot it down.

When Jesus spoke there in Matthew 16, 24, he used the word disciple this way. The word means one who learns and does not just one who learns, not just one who receives education and doesn't do anything with it. Nobody needs that in life.

The word means to learn and to do. The word we get from here is a pupil, a student in a class. We also get the word from this apprentice, somebody who is learning, someone who is taking in with the absolute motive of doing.

The Christian faith is a doing faith. The Bible says that God is love. And you all know in any language in the world, the word love, no matter what it is spoken in, is a verb.

It is an action word. You cannot say you love someone without taking care of them, without ministering to them, without showing that love. It's an amazing thing.

The word love, the act of love cannot be separated. So when you say, well, I love you, that means that there there's this sense of of you'll do anything for me or I'll do anything for you. When Jesus says, I love you, it's obviously proven in Christ that he'll do anything for us.

And then Jesus turns as we'll hear tonight and says to us that we need to love one another, a true act of discipleship. He uses this other word. Look with me there in Matthew 16, 24, the word anyone, if anyone.

And that is a great statement because it makes. The invitation for all people to become a Christian, no matter who you might be, no matter what you believe now, you can come to faith in Jesus Christ and. Be what Jesus said is born again, you can become a Christian, you don't become a Christian by joining some church or signing some documents.

It is a divine, supernatural work in the heart. And it's listen, it's directly connected to being a disciple. You cannot be a Christian without being a disciple.

And if you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, you will naturally be a Christian. Well, look at the word desire, he who desires to come after me that were desire means to be thirsting, hungering, focused with an unwavering pursuit of God. That's what that word desire.

Jesus says, if you come to me with an unwavering desire to pursue me. Jesus says you'll be my disciple. That's an important and much needed declaration tonight.

Church, as we gather together tonight, this is a great classroom setting for you and I to say, Lord, am I desiring you as much as I ought? Now, maybe tonight you would say, you know, Pastor Jack, I don't know if I desire God as much as I ought to. Well, praise God you're here. That's great that you're listening.

Ask him to put that within your heart. There is nothing out of our reach when we pray and ask our Lord nothing. Do you want more faith? Yes.

Pray. Do you want to serve him? Yes. Then pray.

Do you want to grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus? Look, it's a Wednesday night. You're here. You could have done anything else in this world around us, and you've come here, and I assume because you're hungering and thirsting because you desire more of him.

Then look at the next word. Deny. Let him deny himself.

That word means, listen, concerning ourselves. I'll just pick on me right now. If I'm going to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That word deny means this, that I'm going to deny to the point of disowning me, hear me out, to disown myself, to disavow myself, to abstain from myself. Listen, this sounds strange. And if you're a psychologist in here tonight, you're going to say somebody called a doctor.

But the word also means to depart from yourself. How does somebody depart from themselves? Well, listen, Jesus said, whatever your pursuits are, whatever your passions are, whatever those things that are of this world and of yourself, he's saying, I want you now to make a decision to depart from those things. He said, Jack, are you saying that I shouldn't have a desire to go to college? That's not what I'm saying.

Are you saying that I shouldn't marry that person or that? I'm not saying that. Well, I really want to be a corporate executive or I really want to be an architect or I really want. That's not what I'm saying.

Jesus is saying this. Whatever you have as a target in your life for our pursuits, you need to put Christ at the top of that thing. And listen, everything that you do is with Jesus first.

Being a disciple, it's amazing to realize, and I know this sounds shocking to say, but it is theologically accurate. Nobody who's in heaven tonight. Got there by not being a disciple, you have got to be a disciple to follow Christ so much so that the thief on the cross who was converted to Christ in that moment before entering eternity, that that was his window, his moment of being a disciple.

And he didn't fail. Didn't he give testimony? Lord, will you remember me when you come into your kingdom? What a great statement. And that man, that thief on the cross there in Luke's gospel, can you

imagine throughout all the world how many people in their last hour of breath look to that story, look to that portion of Scripture and said, you know what, there's hope for me.

Maybe you're here tonight and you think there's no hope for you. Oh, there's hope for you. All right.

And in a second, you can become a disciple of Jesus Christ. Now, what about us who have lived for a while? Ah, we'll talk about that tonight. It's encouraging.

He says, take up your cross in that verse. That means this. Now, this is important.

That's our issues of life, our challenges, our hardships, our calling. Don't shout it out, but where are you in this life right now? You might say, I've got this situation, I've got this issue, I've got this hardship, or I've got this challenge, this call upon my life. Listen, are you a Christian tonight? Yes, I'm a Christian.

Then listen, great. Then you are a disciple of Jesus Christ. You are to take up that cross of yours and you are to bear it.

This is the Christian walk. Look, I hope I don't blow anybody's minds, but if somebody told you becoming a Christian is the easiest thing in the world to do, let me let me straighten that out right now. In this world, if you are going to be a real Christian, which are very rare these days, you are going to be a follower of Jesus Christ and you will have issues in life to deal with.

They could be physical. At times they're emotional. They are maybe financial.

They may be something that is of deep spiritual challenge to you, whatever it might be. To be a disciple is to embrace those things rather than panic and throw our arms up and say, God, why? How could you be doing this to me? And God would say, because I love you. And like Tevye in Fiddler on the Roof, he answers back and says, Lord, can't you love somebody else for a while? No, you're the disciple, you're the follower of Jesus, and God is committed to growing us up.

It's awesome to realize. And then finally, this word follow. And here it comes all back around to that word disciple.

The disciple will follow me, says Jesus. That word follow means to be united in the same journey. To walk the same way, it's often been stated the word mimic or to walk or move in the same direction to pilgrim along a wayfarer or a traveler.

A follower. The Bible tells us that we are in this world, but not of this world, and that our citizenship is in heaven. That's fantastic.

This world is not what we're living for. We're living for the world to come. Someone said, don't you guys want to inherit the earth, you Christians? Hey, listen, that's up to Jesus to decide.

What we want to do is inherit the presence of God himself. That's what we're living for. That's what we're longing for.

And those are the Old Testament dispensation in your Bibles. The book of Hebrews speaks to and Hebrews 11:13. There the Bible says that they all died in faith.

That is in the wilderness. That is in the Old Testament time. They died in faith, not having received the promises.

Why? Because the promises fulfillment was still yet to come. But having seen them from afar off, they were assured of them and embrace them and confess that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. That is an awesome statement.

By the way, that is a verse that William Bradford, the great pilgrim, often quoted and often taught on when he was enlightened. And then, of course, when they made it to America, pilgrims and strangers, they cited it often that they were passing through. Look, when I was a Christian back in the 70s, there was this cartoon that I don't know who drew, but some of you know it.

It's a hippie with his sandals on and he's kind of like this with a peace sign and he's got a cross around his neck and his long hair was flowing. And it said just passing through. And that was the life of the Christian and it is the life of the Christian today.

This is all introduction. We haven't started yet. The Book of Philippians chapter three, verse 20, says, For our citizenship is in heaven from which we eagerly wait.

Do you eagerly wait? Because the disciple does for our savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. And as Christian disciples of Jesus Christ, we're serious and passionate about knowing him. In this life.

It's all that we can. OK, so listen, let's dive into this point, number one in our study tonight, the disciplines of discipleship. What does it mean to be a disciple? How do I know if I'm doing those things? Number one sounds kind of obvious, but be careful.

Point number one, discipleship requires a conversion. You say, Jack, did I come here tonight to hear that I'm already saved? Well, first of all, let's not take any chances. This is the issue.

There's no such thing as discipleship without being converted to Christ. This may sound almost insulting to some of us, but it's the most basic fundamental thing is that. We'd be discipled, in fact, Satan has engineered, listen, a plethora of things to give you enough religion, a little injection, a little inoculation of religion to get you going on something, and then he'll load you up with being busy, being preoccupied, going through maybe legalism.

Listen, when we're not converted to Christ. But religious, we will gravitate towards legalism. We will love legalism.

Why? Because it feeds the flesh. Did you pray today? Did you read today? Did you go to this today? Did you do that today? I did. Boy, I tell you, when you meet that kind of an attitude, you are meeting an attitude that is proud, that is impressed with self, that is grandizing self.

And there's no room for Christ. Legalism is a dangerous thing. And legalism always looks down the nose upon other people.

Discipleship demands conversion. And Satan will gladly allow you to have a little bit of religion. It could be even a little inoculation.

Of Christianity. All of the trappings, maybe you own a cross, maybe you own a Bible, maybe you go to church at Christmas and Easter. Just enough for you to think, I'm OK with God, but let me ask you, are

you faithfully daily following Jesus as he demands of us? That's required.

You see, Jack, you saying that I work my way into heaven, I'm saying the exact opposite. Once you are converted, you start your path with God, you start a walk with God, you're already saved. If you die the night that you give your heart to Christ or 30 years later, you're just as saved all along the way.

Don't think for a moment, well, who's who's up there in the big seats in heaven, the guys that have been saved along? That's that Billy Graham seat up there. Billy Graham was saved the moment he said yes to Jesus as he is now. But see, when we think legalism and works, no, that's not salvation.

Works is the fruit that comes out of knowing the Lord. It has nothing to do with salvation other than in this life, it shows forth that we've done good works on the God, but no true person converted walks around saying, man, look, wow, I've got so many great works. Boy, heaven is going to be really happy to see me show up.

That's not how it works. Mark this down, it's important, it's this remembering our sinful states. Discipleship requires conversion.

And we need to be reminded of the fact, church, listen, I'm not insulting you tonight. So don't get up and run out of the building. I'm saying this, that we who are disciples of Jesus are very mindful that we are sinners saved by the grace of God.

That's why we sing with our hands lifted up. We're so happy. We are so glad about that, that he saved us.

Mark this Romans 323, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Man, you would think if God said that in the Bible, as he did, that there's no hope for us. The exact opposite.

The doctor says to you, you're sick. And I'm going to give you this shot to make you better. Stop right there.

When we were little kids, we would plead with our mothers, we would do anything we want, anything that we could to get her to not take us to go get that shot at the doctors. You guys, I had a medical procedure not too long ago. Actually, it was a little bit a while ago, I guess now to think about it.

And, you know, they put you out. And during the procedure, I woke up. And but when I was in recovery, I didn't remember that.

But the doctor comes into the recovery room and says, he comes in and he takes his mask off and he's laughing. And I'm thinking, well, I guess everything went fine. And he says, Man, you okay? You know, and I go, Yeah, yeah, you know, fine.

And he goes, Man, you, you woke up halfway through that procedure. And he said, You, you started swinging at me and trying to hit the nurses. And we turned up the flow of the heroin or whatever they put in your in your face.

And before he said before it took effect, he said, You started saying to me, Doctor, I'll give you my car. I'll give you my wallet. I said, I didn't start bribing.

I'll do anything if you just stop this. The doctor was working on me to fix me. He had a plan that would make my life better.

I was resisting when the Bible says all have sinned. The person who's not converted, but is religious hears that and goes, I can't believe I'm hearing that in church. Well, first of all, it's in the Bible.

Where are you going to hear this? This is Bible. I can't believe God would say that that can't be in the Bible. No, it's there.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. It gets better. Romans 3 10 says, And as it as it is written, there is none that does righteousness.

No, not one. So, man, you're just you're giving me a paper cut and you're pouring salt on it right now. No, listen, the doctor says you're sick.

You need help. We need to do this. And that's how you get better.

God says, Didn't Jesus say, I've come to heal those that are sick? I've come to deliver those and find those who are lost. What you want to do is wake up to the reality of being a disciple. You've got to start with being converted to Christ first and say, well, pastor, how do I know if I've been converted to Christ? It's very simple to know.

You will want him to rule and reign in your life. Yes, you and I struggle with grabbing the reins and grabbing the wheel, and then the Lord says, excuse me, but can I drive now? And you go, yeah, OK, and you hand it back over. That happens every day and thought process and decision making and issues.

We've got to keep handing him the wheel. That's the life of a disciple. Disciples don't necessarily walk on water.

But there are times when they could, you know. There are times when disciples don't always raise the dead, but there's times, you know, they've been called to do that. Think about that for just a moment.

There are disciples preaching and teaching and they were doing a great job of it. But there was a little boy possessed with a demon and Jesus had to come down the mountain and rescue the disciples from their moment of weakness. And didn't Jesus say this one does not come out, but without much fastened in prayer, it's an amazing thing to follow Jesus Christ.

An example of. Being a disciple and being one that's disciplined, listen to this first Timothy chapter one verse 15 says this is a faithful, sane and worthy of all acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. Is that good news? So, OK, I'm feeling better now.

Listen to what Paul said. This is the ultimate disciple, Paul, the apostle. The next thing he says after that comma is of whom I am chief.

Do you hear that? You guys, if Paul, the apostle were here right now and we had a camera and a microphone, say, Paul, you said that right there for Timothy 115. Did you mean that? Are you listening? A true disciple will say, listen, not only did I say it, but in my discipleship with Jesus, walking on the same road with him these years, I have come to this conclusion that there's no good thing that dwells within me unless God does it, that within me I understand that I have sinned to come short of the glory of God. Ladies and gentlemen, church family right here, right now, one of the reasons why I've been longing for this series is because there is somebody perhaps in a crowd this size being tempted in their thoughts right now.

I'm not going to come back and ever hear that again. Do you know what? I'm sorry about that. I'm sorry that you feel that way.

I hope that you have a change of mind. You'll never see heaven unless as a disciple, you understand that the savior saves sinners. It's sin that scourged our lives and wrapped us up to deliver us to hell.

And he comes and rescues us from that, that causes us to turn around and say, Lord, I don't know how you do that, but you said in your Bible to whom much is forgiven. That person loves much. Only God in Jesus Christ through the cross and resurrection from the dead can take your sinful life in mind and turn it around for a victory.

That's why this church I saw a guy last Sunday walk right past me. I know him. He was a murderer.

He did his time and he's out and he's sitting right next to you right now. I'm kidding. A real murder.

Free, but not free until Jesus sets him free. There is no sin that can keep you from the salvation of Christ. Except your pride.

And so, listen, I want to say I love you, I love you so much to tell you this as I as if I were a doctor. Remember our sinful state that God has saved us and we've been delivered from a great, great scourge, as it were. I was speaking at a conference at a state on Tuesday and for them it was kind of radical for you guys as normal.

And and then afterwards I was out walking around and stuff and people were saying, man, you're so excited about God. You're so excited about God. And I said, well, yeah, I mean, come on.

If you knew how much he has forgiven me. Then you'd be excited about God to see only him, only God can take and the worst and turn things around. It's wonderful, our sins in light of his sacrifice.

No wonder why we lift our hands in praise. That's what disciples do. Luke chapter five, verse eight, when Simon Peter saw the catch of fish.

He fell down at Jesus's feet and saying, depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord, that's a disciple. Perhaps the most wonderful example of awareness is in Luke 18, 13. It's very humble, it's very precious.

This is a disciple in the making. And the text collector standing afar off, Jesus said, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat upon his chest, saying, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. And Jesus said in verse 14, I tell you that this man went down to his house justified.

I hope all of you understand the magnitude of that. That the true person who's a disciple has first entered into that course with conversion, has been born again, as Jesus said in John three, and his walks a life of appreciation. Honestly, come on.

It's awful quiet in here. You guys with me? This is a very important thing. I could post a bunch of rules on on a wall.

And welcome to welcome to our church. And here's this 89 rules that you have to keep at our church. And if you do all these, then maybe you'll get baptized.

If you all do if you do all these things, maybe you can become a member all these hoops and stuff to jump through. And here's the thing. If you're unconverted, and you jump through those hoops, you come out the other end and your head is so big, you can't even get it through the sanctuary doors.

Because you're so impressed with you. Because you've made the grade. If you're converted, and you're gay, and you're going through those steps, like Martin Luther, remember, he goes to Rome, he's going up those stairs on his knees.

And he had just read that the just shall live by faith. And he's going up those stairs on his knees and his blood on those steps and people are going up there to get purified. Luther gets halfway up there.

And then he makes it to the top. And he sees what's going on. He says, You know what, this is nuts.

The just shall live by faith. He said, Well, Pastor, you mean faith? That's too simple. Listen, faith also requires that we come to God and actually come to God.

After being slain to death by the Holy Spirit, so to speak. You and I are to be crucified regarding our own passions and desires. Are you guys hanging on? You ready for this? You can't say you're a disciple and live like Hades six days a week and then come running in the church.

And I'm good, God, right? I'm good, right? I'm here, right? That's got to count for something, right? And then run back out and live for yourself. You know what the Bible says in the book of Galatians chapter six, it says you've deceived yourself. And First John says, the light and the truth is not in you.

Do I expect these Wednesday nights to grow after making such things only with those who care? This is very serious stuff. I'd rather have you be 30 of you totally pumped up, ready for heaven, ready to take on the world than a big fat church. And we're all anemic.

We're all, you know, skin and bones, so to speak spiritually. I read a guy today who said that what we need to experience as disciples is the despondent despairing of self is what sets the disciple of Jesus Christ on his journey. Have you ever read Pilgrim's Progress? Church, I encourage you, it's usually every year the second most purchased book in the world, Pilgrim's Progress by John Bunyan.

Get a modern version of it and read it. You won't be able to put it down and you'll understand that statement. Jesus said this way in Matthew eleven twenty nine.

He says, take my yoke upon me and learn from me. That's a disciple. I'm going to be a disciple.

I'm going to learn from him for I am gentle, he says, and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls. It's amazing that God himself declares that he's humble. Don't you think that if you're talking to a real disciple, there's there'll be a manifest humility in their life.

You know what? It will be obvious. Remembering our state point number two is this, the disciplines of discipleship. Number two is discipleship requires a cost.

It is costly. There's a cost to discipleship that cannot be paid. By anyone or anyone else, it's got to be our experience.

It requires personal discipline. Just saying that sounds strange in our age, in our culture, huh? You guys, I tell you, and it's divine. I'm going to share something with you personal.

It's not in my notes, but you need to hear it because it's good for you. With all the stuff that's coming against my life and this church a week or so ago. Remember, we had General Boykin here and I don't know what amazing decree was made in heaven.

But. Since him coming, that precious man now has called my house five or six times. We have talked several days back to back days.

And he is he just says, Jack, I was praying. I got a word from the Lord for you. You need to hear this.

I am hearing the general of the Delta Force, a legend, and he's saying, listen, I was praying for you and you need to hear this. And I'm listening to this stuff. And you know, you're kind of like this.

And he's hello, General. Hi, how are you? He starts talking. What? OK.

Oh, my gosh. Do you know what that does? It makes you want to get back on the journey again. It makes you say that's right.

Hallelujah. Makes you put your helmet on and want to just run, you know, like. It's exciting, but it requires personal discipline.

I will get up earlier and pray. I will make time to read my Bible. So this sounds legalistic.

No, it's not. It's personal disciplines. Young people tonight, I promise you make time for God first.

Look, listen, parents, just hear me out for a second. Young people, you don't need to set up a New Year's resolution. I'm going to Twitter less this year.

I'm not going to Facebook as much. You know what? You can make those promises all you want. It's not going to work.

You know, you beat it. You know how you get victory with this. You start to pursue God.

I'm hooked on Facebook. Hey, OK, look, let's not talk about Facebook. Here's what you're going to do before you eat, drink or go to the bathroom.

I'm just talking to the guys in here tonight. Hey. Guys, girls, you can listen in to guys.

Let's make a covenant. You get up in the morning. OK, we'll let you go to the bathroom, OK? But you will not eat.

You will not drink. Until you've spent an hour with Jesus. So are you kidding me? Try it.

See what happens. You know all those things that plague you. Is it pornography? You want to have it destroyed in your life.

You don't go to some course or you don't tell all your friends about it or you don't, you know, go on to some online, you know, replace it with Jesus Christ. Make no time for that stuff by making time for him. And he'll push it out.

He will not share you with any pagan altar. Well, you know what, Pastor Jack, that's not my thing, but Nordstrom's is my thing. Get up, go to the bathroom, but you're not going to eat or drink anything or go to

work until you've spent an hour with God.

Discipline yourself. You've got to do this. Oh, I hope someone's here in tonight and I hope that somebody hears this and does this for a week or two or three or a month and comes back and says, Pastor Jack, get out of the way.

I got to tell those people that what you said worked because that other junk's destroying lives. Second Timothy, chapter two, verse twenty one. Therefore, if anyone cleanses himself from the ladder, the junk of the world, he will be a vessel fit for honor.

Don't you want to be that? A disciple does. A disciple says, yeah, I do. Sanctified and useful for the master prepared for every good work.

That's a great word. That means you've been in church listening and you leave on Sundays and Wednesdays and all the other days that you're here and you run out of the building. What do you want me to do now? God, just show me pointing in the direction.

Man, that's awesome. Ready for every good work. Flee also youthful lust, but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the name of the Lord of a pure heart, but avoid foolish.

Listen to this. Avoid. Can you guys hear me? Avoid foolish.

And ignorant disputes. Knowing that they lead or generate strife. If somebody says, hey, man, you want to hear this thing about Fred? Number one, say, can I quote you? That's that will always stop them.

Hey, you want to hear the latest gossip? Well, before you tell me, can I quote you? What's your name anyway? Can I quote you? And then secondly, I would even talk with them. I would just take off. I would flee those stupid, youthful lust and the like.

Paul says, get out of there. Discipleship is the purest. Listen.

Discipleship is the purest form of worship. I want you to think about that for a second. If your heart is set on a pilgrimage.

And you have given your life to Jesus. You're going to know that, you know, on Sundays, when I say for those of you who at this moment accept Christ, those of you who have, you know that you're Christ, you belong to him. You know why I say that? Because those who know Jesus, they have got to worship him, not just singing in how we eat, where we go, what we do publicly, privately.

Who are we? Do you know, have you remembered that his eyes go to and fro and they're always upon us? Now, you might say, man, that's that. No, listen to the Christian. I want to say this.

You know why his eyes are always on you. Some people hear that and they see it like this, right? Like he's got a big hammer. Is God watching me all the time? And the picture, the little bubble picture over your head is no.

Listen, Christian. God watches you without fail. His eyes are always on you because he's Abba, father, and every father cannot take his eyes off his kids.

This is not going to happen. Dad is always looking. It's wonderful.

Discipleship is the purest form of worship. Second Samuel 24, 24 says, I will not offer burnt offerings unto the Lord, David said, my God, with that which cost me nothing. So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for 50 shekels of silver.

That's a lot of money. David said, I am not going to worship God without a cost in my life. Discipleship requires costs.

Exodus 20, verse three, listen to this, Exodus 20, verse three, the divine priority of discipleship, God says in the Ten Commandments, the first one is you shall have no other gods before me. Wow. So mark this down.

Discipleship requires a cost and that requires us finding our heart's treasure. This this right now tonight causes you and I'd have to look inside of ourselves. This is very clinical tonight.

Do you claim to be a Christian? If inside your mind and heart you say yes, then follow that true all the way. If you say you're a Christian, is there evidence of you being a disciple? Are you following him? You've read the Gospels, the disciples followed him. Was it always easy for them to follow him? No.

In fact, most of the time appears they were making mistakes most of the time or misunderstanding him. Is that not where you and I are at right now in our walks with him? Please don't think for a moment that God is only working in the lives of super saints which don't exist. We have this tendency to look at all these other people and think if where our hearts are tender, we think everyone's just doing so much better than me.

I am I am the bonehead and the body of Christ. And then if you're a legalist, unsaved religionist, you say things like this, boy, it's too bad all those people around here are not like me. You see the opposite ends of the spectrum.

What's in your heart? Matthew 6, 19. Matthew 6, 19, Jesus says, don't store up treasures on earth where they can be eaten by moths or get rusty, where thieves break in and steal store your treasures in heaven, where they will never become moth eaten or rusty and where they will be safe from thieves. Wherefore, he says, your treasure is and wherever that is there, your heart and your thoughts will be also.

That's a great statement. That's out of the New Living Translation. That's why you didn't recognize it so easily.

I like the end of that. Wherever the treasure is in your heart, whatever it is, that is where your thoughts are going to be. So listen, what occupies your thoughts more than anything else in any given day? Now, some of you and I, I used to be very, very almost convicted sick regarding this challenge.

That's why I'm sharing it tonight. The job that I came from, the career that I had, you couldn't mess up. I mean, I messed up once and I cost the company \$17,000 in a minute.

It was terrifying. And so you're so focused. You know what I'm you know what I'm talking about? You're so focused on what you're doing.

And you're not even you're not you're there's nothing else in your mind. And I remember when it was done. Wow.

Next thought, praise the Lord. Praise the Lord. I'm a Christian.

Thank you. Do you know what I'm talking about? Or am I just nuts? You get so caught up in what you're doing. And then when you break away, it's like, Oh, yes, I belong.

I belong to God. It's an it's like fresh air again. It's wonderful treasures.

And Luke 14:33. Jesus is so likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple. Wow.

You see, Jack, does that mean to give stuff away? Somebody said, you are to have nothing attached to your heart, but him. Now, if you cannot own that skateboard without worshiping the thing, then you need to get rid of it. If you have lost your identity because somebody stole your what? Then that was an idol.

You know, I don't need to get into this, but go study later all about Abraham and Isaac. Why ask yourself, go find out why did God have to take Abraham to Mount Moriah regarding Isaac? I'm not going to tell you you have to go find that out. There is something wrong going on there.

Abraham saw Isaac, his son, too big, too much, too dear. How do you know, Pastor? Because I read the book. It says it says when God spares Isaac's life there on the altar, God says, Now, Abraham, I know that you love me and you will not withhold anything from me.

Do you see? Is there somebody in your life that's an idol and they're between you and God? Did somebody say to you, I can't live without you? That's not the person to marry. You mean everything to me and you want me to marry you? You want somebody to say, listen, I love God first. I love God the most.

I love you, too. And I'm going to follow him if you're coming or not. That hey, listen, young man, young lady, that's the person that you want to pray more about getting married to, you know.

But if somebody says, I can't live without you, I need you in my life. Get out of there. That's an idol.

You're an idol. Not good. Things that can destroy us.

Philippians three, seven. But what things were gained to me, says Paul, he is the absolute disciple. What things were gained to me, he says, these I've kind of lost for Christ.

I don't care about him. Yet, indeed, I also count all things lost for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ, Jesus, my Lord, for whom I've suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish that I may gain Christ. I did a search today.

Watch this. Was Moses awesome? He was awesome. But did Moses get in arguments with God? Funny arguments even.

Peter, how about Peter? Did Peter love God? Of course he did. Did Peter get in arguments with Jesus? Then comes Paul. Paul blows my mind.

I can't find one argument in the Bible where Paul takes God on. Paul, let me tell you, I'm going somewhere with this. See, Jack, come on.

He was a Jewish before of a Pharisee who was killing Christians. Yeah. Before he got converted.

That's right. He sanctioned murder of Christians. And he even says, I did it out of the goodness of my heart.

He said, I thought I was doing God a favor there, getting rid of these bonehead Christians. And then he got converted. For him to have been a Pharisee, you guys, he was an extremely disciplined man.

When he decides to follow Jesus, Paul never looks back. He didn't care about the world. He said, I'll lose it all.

And that's a powerful thing to keep in mind. Point number three, we'll end with this one. The disciplines of discipleship requires a cross.

You're not going to hear this in church anymore. You're going to be a disciple of Jesus. You have to have a cross.

I'm not talking about the one around your neck. I'm talking about the one that you're on. You say, I'm not on a cross.

Well, you better hurry up and find one and get on it quick. What do you mean? This is what I mean. And Luke 9, 23, Jesus is.

If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross daily and follow me. And as I thought about that word daily, I looked it up and it means literally a 24 hour day, hour by hour. Daily, something that is an absolute routine.

Jesus said that the believer takes up the cross. It's the routine of his life. It's the routine of her life.

It's in the face of hardships. Listen, church, those things that cause you and I to flare up or to judge or to be angry or to say, man, that drives me crazy. We're supposed to stop and say, wait, am I actually refusing the opportunity to embrace this cross? That's why, listen, marriage is so hard.

And so rewarding. It's so strange and so fulfilling. At times, your emotions say this is wrong, and then your will says this is life.

Did you know it's the closest thing you can find on Earth with our relationship with God is being married? Our God invented marriage. And I don't know what people think today. Well, let's get married.

We could have sex all the time. Wow. Bills come.

Husband throws up in the carpet. Wife gets laid off. The lawn is, you know what I'm saying? So what, what, what? Marriage is a ministry and it's hard.

But if you get on the road. And determined to make it happen, guess what? There's a reason why the Bible says that the pastor of a church needs to be the husband of one wife has have his kids under order. For how will he know how to govern the church if he doesn't govern his family? Think of that.

It's powerful. That was not in my notes. I thought I'd give that to you freely there.

But I thought about this. I daily take my one a day vitamins daily. I daily drink water.

I daily eat. And you know what? I daily pray. I daily read my Bible.

I daily ask God to forgive me of my sins. Well, daily also add those things that are driving you and I crazy. What is it? And then those words come into my mind of encouragement.

Pastor Jack, you're going to stand up and you're going to do this as the general was telling me. And you're going to stand firm and you're going to, and I'm going to, I'm going to call you tomorrow. And I'm going to see how you're doing.

Awesome. By the way, we need we need one another in our in each other's lives. Just like that.

You guys better start getting along or hugging or whatever you need to do with one another. You're going to be with each other in heaven forever. So get used to it now.

Discipleship requires a cross. We'll quickly look at this and then we'll end it. It's this walking the believers road.

Church is amazing. It's amazing. In Mark chapter 2, verse 13, walking the believers road.

It says there that then he went out again by the sea and all the multitude came to him. That is Jesus. And he taught them.

That word is didasko in Greek, by the way. It means he taught them verse by verse. Wow.

As he passed by, he saw Levi, the son of Alphaeus. We know him. Levi, Matthew, Matthew, Levi, sitting at the tax office.

He was just he's working for the Rome. He's a turncoat Jew. He's Jewish.

Matthew Levi can't get more Jewish than that. But he's working for Rome. He's a traitor.

And he's sitting there making money. Probably got his nose down, holding his hand. OK, go next.

Jesus walks by. Oh, man, would you love to see that happen? I mean, what happened? Jesus walks by. Come and follow me.

There's a radical moment. Come and follow me. That's all he says.

Follow me. The word is my disciple. I'll be the journeyman master.

You be the apprentice students. What do you think about that, Levi? Four things he did. Remember that Luke nine twenty three, when Jesus has come after me.

That means that I you we together must deny ourselves. Number two, take up our own custom cross. That's the stuff that goes on in your life and mine.

It's custom for us. Listen, my friends, cheer up. I don't get to carry your cross and you don't get to carry my cross.

It's a custom cross. Some of our crosses are pinstripe and some of them are on fire. He'll never give you something you cannot bear.

Three, it's daily. And for he said, follow me. Galatians six, 17.

Paul, the apostle, the ultimate disciple, said from now on, let no one trouble me. For I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus. What a statement.

You know, there's a reference to, you know, the scars Jesus has on him. This is what Paul is saying. The scars that Jesus has on him.

Because I'm walking with him, I got the same scars and Paul was scarred, brutally beaten, numerous accounts, so many stones thrown at him in one account that it killed him and the Lord brought him back. This guy must have looked like. Can you imagine what he must have looked like? We have these we have these ministers of the gospel coming in.

It's like in an entourage limousines. Paul comes walking in. Who knows what he looked like? What he had half an ear, cheekbone crushed by rocks and stones, his flesh ripped open because he was beaten so many times.

Can you imagine if Paul walked in here and he said, somebody call security? Remember what we learned a few weeks ago? When the general said right here in this pulpit, I'm going to stand before God with scars all over my body and he's got scars all over his body. And he said, Jesus is going to look at me and say, Jerry, those scars look good on you. And he's going to respond and say, Lord, I got them serving you.

And I'm very happy about that. Come on, disciples. So what does it mean to take up the cross? First, this is what it doesn't mean.

It's not the cross of salvation that's already settled. Can someone say thank you, Jesus? It's not the cross of salvation. But if you're going to hang out with Jesus, the cross that you will bear are the daily callings that he places upon your life to be a witness.

It can be in a thousand different angles. It can be 360 degrees. It's what comes into your life.

Did the boss say this to you today? He said it to you today under the watchful eye of your father in heaven. And he wanted you to be a disciple today so that you'd respond in a certain way that would give honor to God. That when the Lord heard your response, maybe nobody else in the office smiled, but the Lord smiled.

Maybe somebody did this to you on the freeway or whatever it might be, and that moment began, maybe flared up inside you. Well, I had to cut that guy off. And then you remembered, Lord, that would that would not be right.

Roy, did that happen to you today? Roy's going, man, I'm convicted of it. I'll see you later. But that that comes up and then the Lord says now, Jack.

Yes, Lord, you're right. That's being a disciple, you guys. It's fighting thick and through all the way.

It's taken up the cross and following him. Listen, concerning Paul, the apostle, but it also concerns us. A man who is known to carry his cross.

Listen. When called to follow Jesus, Paul did. He just got up and he did it.

You guys, when asked to take the gospel to Europe, he did. When commanded to explain to Caesar Christianity, he did. When they said, you know what, deny Jesus, we're going to throw you in this prison here in Rome and you're going to rot.

And we're before you're done rotting, though, we're going to cut your head off. He stayed true. It's an amazing thing to realize.

We are called to be disciples and it is going to be. A hard thing, and I want to tell you now, this is the 21st century, you guys. And it is quickly, rapidly in our own backyard becoming anti-Christian.

If I offend you tonight and you say I'm going to take my toys, I'm going home. Please don't do that. You need to be ready for anything and everything.

And so I'm going to ask you to commit to these 31 weeks. That's like over a half a year. So what else are you going to do? Watch American Idol? Honestly.

So here's your assignment. Come back. Notebook.

Drag some unsuspecting other Christian friend with you. Why? So that when we come to the end of our services, you are released into a world that is dying. And they need us to be disciplined.

They don't even know it. So that we can give them the real deal. I'm going to ask you to remain seated right now and let's pray.

Heavenly Father, we come to you tonight and this is a serious thing. My heart specifically goes out to the younger generation that's here tonight. I feel so much like their dad right now because thinking if they just do this, their life will be blessed.

But I'm not their dad, but you are their father. And Lord, in Jesus name, I pray right now that you would move upon this gathering of saints here and now. And Lord Jesus, that you would pour out your spirit upon them.

Father, that you would move and Lord, that you would galvanize us for these days. And Lord, that to be that disciple, we would begin tonight by saying, Lord, here I am. Take control of my life.

Give me a greater hunger for your word, a greater passion for your truth. Let's begin tonight by worshiping him. As we worship him now in our song, in our giving, may we approach him with an absolute sold out heart and soul.

He is your love. He is your life. And we give unto him our praise, our worship and our thanks.

Let's bless him now in Jesus name. Oh, your presence. The story.

Oh, I won't leave you. Each new day. There is no.

No. But Jesus. Crucified.

In confusion. Your son. The.

In the. Of my weakness. Me.

To do. And. You.

I. Is. So. My.

There is no. No. But.

Crucified. No. There is no.

But. Crucified. Heavenly Father, tonight we just stand and.

Each of us individually, it's amazing to realize that there will be a day when we stand again. In your presence. And there's going to be that moment.

Your Bible tells us that we will fall down before you. And I pray for the young man or the young woman. I pray for that senior citizen tonight.

I pray for that executive. I pray for that home, that homeless person that might have come in here tonight. Searching and longing for the.

The woman who's just lost that job. And father. If they don't know you.

Then tonight. Right where they're at. May they have learned that their hardship, their issue, their challenge.

Is to bring them to the cross, to bring them to Jesus. And there's the hearts in here tonight, I pray that it's all these hearts tonight that are saying to the Lord. Whatever you would have for me, Father God.

I pray tonight that if there is a heart that's hard tonight and hardened. And saying no, no, no. And you're holding out.

Think again, listen again. Stop. You will stand before God.

The terms you can decide now. My friend, right where you're at. Humble yourself before the almighty God.

Inside your soul where the battle rages right now. Tell him, Lord, I'm so upset. I'm so angry.

I'm so hurt. But I know too that I need you and I cannot. I can't clean myself up.

I can't do this. Well, I'll tell you what we're going to do tonight. We're going to have Gia sing that song again.

And we'll just crescendo with that song. Here's what's going to be different. Tonight as we sing this song, it's a great song that she's leading us in.

If you're saying yes to Jesus tonight, I'm going to ask you to pray that song to God. Pray that song to the Lord. Watch what he does.

And when this song is over, the service will be over. We will go out these doors. We will be changed by the spirit of God.

Or we will have refused him. And I pray none of you would refuse him. In Jesus name.

Church, let's blow the roof off this place and worship because it's my prayer. You may not know this, but I'm praying, dear Lord, may this have been the last Wednesday night on earth. That you come back this week and get us out of here.

That we stand before him. So let's practice right now. In confusion, I know your silence still.

In the moment of my weakness, you give me grace to do your will. And when you call, I won't delay. This my song through all my days.

There is no one else more than me. None but Jesus. Crucified to set me free.

Now I live to reign and praise no one else. There is no one else for me. None but Jesus.

Crucified to set me free. Now I live to reign and praise. All my delight is in you, Lord.

All my hope. All my strength. All my delight is in you, Lord.

Forevermore. All my delight is in you, Lord. All my hope.

All my strength. All my delight is in you, Lord. Forevermore.

There is no one else for me. Crucified to set me free. Hey you guys, listen up real quick.

Any men in here from the retreat, raise your hands. That's enough. Guys, Gia, can you lead us in that end part thing that you just did? Whatever that is.

Guys, just men only. No ladies, not yet. And then tell the ladies, you know, switcheroo, whatever you do that.

I want to hear the guys. You guys, I got addicted last Friday night on the mountain when I heard the men sing. Ladies, you can sit down.

Guys. Guys, listen. Guys from the camp.

Follow Gia. Guys that weren't. You'll know what to do.

And then we'll do the ladies and then we'll leave. Okay, listen to this. You'll be blessed.

No one else. I think the guys need to sing that again. No one else.

Ladies, ladies, stand up and guys sit down. There is no. That's awesome.

Is this thing on? Can you hear me? Can you grab the hands of those that are near you right now? Lift your hands up. Grab somebody's hand. Lift it up.

Heavenly Father, I pray. For each and every one of these right now, Lord God. You've saved us each of us for a profound purpose.

And I pray right now, Lord God, that there'd be a sense of destiny on each and every heart here tonight. And Lord, that as they go out tonight, as they wake up tomorrow, as they determined to be a disciple of the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, may there be a sense of prophetic awareness upon their lives.

Lord God, that they would awake tomorrow and say, Lord, what is that thing that you'd have me to do? And father, that you give them eyes and ears to watch and to hear. Of those divine opportunities, those. Sacred moments.

Father, bless your precious ones now. In Jesus name and all God's people said. Amen.

God bless you. We'll see you.

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