

Discipleship (31.7.1985)

by Nigel Lee

Nigel Lee emphasizes the importance of character development and commitment in true discipleship, encouraging believers to fully surrender their lives to God.

Duration: 1:15:47

Scripture: Joshua 1:8, Jeremiah 1:5, Matthew 6:33, Luke 9:57-62, Luke 10:25-37, Luke 11:9-14, Acts 13:2

Topics: "Discipleship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the experiences and teachings of the disciples as they embarked on a summer campaign to spread the word of God. The disciples faced rejection, success, and personal challenges during their journey. They were filled with joy and a sense of freedom while traveling with Christ. The speaker emphasizes the importance of not looking back and fully committing oneself to serving the Lord, even in the face of pressure from family and friends.

Transcript

I think Del Roton has been setting the pattern so far this week. With stories about George. So it's my turn.

I remember we were in a prayer meeting together in Nepal, in Kathmandu. And it was one of those prayer meetings that didn't just stop at one because the transport was leaving for the Catholic Institute, but it went right through the night. And we were tired.

And George was very tired. And we were praying from east to west. We prayed for Bangladesh, we prayed for India, Nepal, Pakistan, Afghanistan, and then George went to sleep.

Sitting in the chair, mouth open, nose pointing up. Fast asleep. We were really feeling, you know, we're disciples, this chap.

So we carried on praying, you see, we prayed our way across Iran and into Turkey, coming up through Greece into Bulgaria. George woke up. Oh God, we pray for Afghanistan! We all just fell about laughing.

And he said, what are you laughing at? We said, you, we've reached Bulgaria already. Oh, he said, take a break, let's take a break now. Go outside for some fresh air.

He went upstairs to the room in the house that we were living in. And said he was going to pray with his wife. And he knelt down on the bed.

Fully clothed. Shoes on. Slept down like this.

And he was still there when I woke him, 6.30 next morning. My mind is full of junk like that. My cup is full of junk like that.

I have been with OM. And I have enjoyed myself enormously. And I sometimes sit and think I must be the happiest man even in OM.

So many amusing, great things have happened over the years. But I'm not going to talk about many more of them. I want to talk tonight about how a summer with OM can lead to a lifetime of service for God.

And I don't just mean staying on and on and on and never leaving OM. But how as a result of a summer like this do we become a world Christian. A real disciple of Jesus Christ.

You see he called us to take up the cross and to follow him. Not just carry it for a few meters and then put it down and go away. But to keep going through life.

Because the Lord is most interested this summer, not so much in what you do, but in who you are and who you are becoming. We've got so many gifts here amongst us. Musical gifts, administrative gifts, speaking gifts.

Even footballing gifts. But whatever your gifts are. And you're going to find some tremendously gifted people perhaps on your team.

God is far more interested in your character than in your gifts. Gifts are temporary. You may have great gifts in speaking or in counseling, great gifts of faith, but they're all temporary.

They last until the Lord comes back. You won't do any evangelism in heaven. There won't be any bible teaching to be done in heaven.

But your character, who you really are, that continues on into eternity. In fact your gifts have been given to you so that your character can develop. Because with every gift that you have built into it are the strains and the disciplines which will produce Christ-like character.

I want you to turn with me tonight to a passage in Luke's gospel. Chapter 9. And we'll begin our reading at verse 51. It's a passage that begins with the bad Samaritans.

And it will end with the good Samaritans. We won't read all those verses, but we will read many. Please you follow in your own language version as I read in English to start with.

Luke 9, 51. As the time approached for him, that's Jesus, to be taken up to heaven. Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

And he sent messengers on ahead. They went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him. But the people there did not welcome him because he was heading for Jerusalem.

When the disciples, James and John, saw this they asked, Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them? But Jesus turned and rebuked them and they went to another village. As they were walking along the road a man said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. Jesus replied, Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the son of man has no place to lay his head.

He said to another man, Follow me. But the man replied, Lord, first let me go and bury my father. Jesus said to him, let the dead bury their own dead.

But you go and proclaim the kingdom of God. Still another said, I will follow you, Lord. But first let me go back and say goodbye to my family.

Jesus replied, No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God. After this the Lord appointed 70, or as some versions have it, 72 others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. He told them, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few.

Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go. I am sending you out like lambs among wolves.

Do not take a purse or bag or sandals and do not greet anyone on the road. When you enter a house, first say, peace to this house. If a man of peace is there, your peace will rest on him.

If not, it will return to you. Stay in that house, eating and drinking, whatever they give for you. For the worker deserves his wages.

Do not move around from house to house. By the way, that's not a verse against door to door evangelism. Let's make that plain before we go on.

And then, from verse 17 down to 24, we're reading German. And then the passage goes on with the Good Samaritan, you know the story well. Let's just run through it very quickly.

First of all, the disciples face rejection. Verses 51 to 56. And the Lord is going to teach us the right attitude to when we get rejected.

And then from verse 57 to 62, the Lord talks to three men. And he makes plain to them the cost of Christian discipleship. These people are now following Christ on his way up to Jerusalem.

And then on the way, he sends 70, or as some Bibles have it, 72 of them, out on a mission of mercy. They are to go out preaching the gospel of peace to whoever they meet. And then, they find that very successful.

They're now not facing rejection, they're not facing angry Samaritans who are chasing them out of their village, that they have been phenomenally successful in what they've done. And where first the Lord taught them the right attitude to rejection, now he begins to teach them the right attitude to success. And as they continue to travel, the Lord then breaks into prayer and praise.

And we see now not the cost of discipleship, so much as the joys of discipleship. That's from verse 21 down to 24. And then we meet the good Samaritan on his mission of mercy.

Now, put all those experiences together. They make quite a summer campaign, don't they? You get rejected from some of the places you go to, you're successful in others. Sometimes you personally face the cost in your own emotions of discipleship.

The problems of where to sleep and what to eat, and the homesickness that grows up inside you. And then there are other times when your soul is just filled with a sense of the joy and the liberty of traveling

with Christ. Quite a summer campaign.

We want to draw out from this passage now lessons that are going to help us and help to commission us for the weeks ahead. Because these disciples don't just have the transforming experiences, they also have the teaching of the Lord's Word. Because just experience alone you can misunderstand without God's Word.

But if you only have teaching, and many of you have had years of teaching, without practical experience, then that's equally imbalanced, isn't it? And the result of all this is a deeper understanding of the Lord and a deeper walk with Him. Now that, that is what the Lord cares about most deeply in these coming weeks. And I want to ask you at the start, are you really open to all that the Lord wants to do in you and for you during these days? I'm going to ask by the end of this meeting for a very clear response to the Lord.

I remember my own very first summer campaign. In some ways it was a bad time. It wasn't as bad as my second summer.

But there are some things I can still remember that were, they weren't so good. But, you know, the end of it all was simply this, that the Lord, that summer, way years back in the 60s, He simply asked me a question. What are you going to do with the rest of your life? I can't remember very much about it, but I can remember that question coming home to me very deeply.

Nigel, what are you going to do with the rest of your life now? I believe the Lord will ask you the same question. All the plans that you have for the future, do they come from Him? Have you asked His permission for all the things that you want to do in the future? That which you're going back to at the end of this summer campaign? Let's hear from the Lord Himself tonight. Go back to chapter 9, verse 51.

They find as they come into this village, there's no hospitality. Samaria is so different from Galilee. These Samaritans, they moved them on, they set the dogs on them.

And James and John were hurt and angry. The Lord had always been very kind to Samaritans. Why should they treat him like this? They were sensitive and they were cross.

They were disappointed. And they were sons of thunder. And they turned to the Lord.

They said, shall we call down fire from heaven to burn this lot up? They had just been on the top of the mountain of transfiguration and seen Moses and Elijah. And in those two men's experience, fire had come down and burnt things up. And they thought, wouldn't it be good if we could just vaporize this lot with heavenly lasers.

They shouldn't treat you like this, Lord. We don't like being rejected like this. We're hungry, we're fed up, we're tired.

And we don't like it. Now what happens if things don't work out as you expect? Do you remember that the Lord has brought you here? All kinds of things may happen this summer that you didn't plan. We used to have a leader in O.M. known as Greg Livingston.

And way back in the early days, the international headquarters of O.M. was in a small grotty town in the north of England. And Greg had arrived at Manchester Airport and he made his way to this dingy house. George was in his little room.

With his wife. Very small room. And his son, his one son.

And George was sitting with all his papers spread out on the window ledge, you see. And there was a fan going in the room, stirring up the hot air in there, you see. And the sun had just performed mightily in the potty.

And Greg Livingston came rushing up the stairs. A fresh arrival over from America. And he pushed open the door of this room.

At that moment, the little boy, Benjamin, had stood up. George's wife stepped back. And caught the edge of the potty.

And the contents shot up into the fan. And the fan then sprayed everything all over George. And all his papers on the window sill.

And it was one of those moments when Greg Livingston felt rejected. You think that's funny, don't you? You've laughed at the poor misfortune of George and Drina and Benjamin, not to say Greg Livingston. Nice and safe laughing in this tent, isn't it? You've got to go out on the team on Friday.

Far worse things can happen than be sprayed with the contents of poor Benjamin's potty. I've had three kids. I mean, that's nothing.

Far worse things can happen. Excuse my brother Ray Anderson at the front. I just put this on the tape for posterity.

You're going to have to leave the room, Ray, in a minute. What happens to your emotions when things do go suddenly, surprisingly, wrong? One of the things God wants to do this summer is to change the way we think about ourselves and about life and about all that we do. Turn over to Philippians, chapter 2. See something there from verse 5 of the mind of Christ.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. Your mind is to be trained to think like His. He was in the very nature of God.

He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped or hung on to, but He made Himself nothing. He took the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross. Do you see what Paul is saying? Because of Christ's mind, He was willing to submit and to serve and to suffer.

It's a human truth, isn't it, that we usually learn more from conflict and from difficulty than we do from other times. We learn more about our own nature and our own reaction. If there are difficulties on the team, if there are conflicts boiling up inside your own mind and heart, it may well be because God wants to teach you something much more deeply at this time.

And so the Lord leads these disciples into a village where He knows full well they will be rejected. It wasn't a mistake. The Lord hadn't got His geography wrong.

The Lord knew exactly what was going to happen. Because in years to come, these disciples are going to have to go and preach and minister lovingly in Samaria. And so we accept what comes, seeking to learn to think with the mind of Christ.

And then from verse 57 to 62, the Lord goes on to talk about the cost of discipleship. Three men faced with a different aspect of discipleship. In verse 58, He talks about insecurity.

There are times when the Son of Man has less than foxes and the birds of the air. In verse 59, He says, your religious traditions, they must change. You must be willing to be flexible.

Some of the results of your background and your upbringing need to change. Because loyalty to Jesus Himself takes priority over everything else. Some of your family ties are going to have to go.

I can remember when I came out of college in England with a degree. I was challenged by the Lord just to give it all back to Him. You see, the normal way is to think, well, because I've got a particular qualification, therefore I must go on to use it.

And for many people, the Lord does lead them that way. But for me, the Lord said, no, you give it all back to Me. I gave it to you in the first place.

All your plans, you give them back to Me. Let Me rewrite them for you. Will you let the Lord decide your future? For some, the risk of surrendering their whole life to Christ lies perhaps wrapped up with marriage.

Afraid that they might not get the husband or the wife of their choosing. So many people have come through OM conferences like this, year after year, with that same worry hidden away inside their hearts. The Lord's will, you know, is the best for you.

Do you really doubt that? Do you doubt it? Do you think if God has His way with your life, then somehow what happens to you will be second best? Is there one of you, one of you here that's going to stand up and say, yes, I'm afraid I believe that. God's will for my life will prove to be a shabby second best. Cannot be.

Cannot be. Some of you are clinging on to a career that you want. And the Lord says, you follow Me.

He said to these men here, you follow Me. You go proclaim the kingdom. You put your hand to the plough and then look back.

You're not fit for service in the kingdom of God. Now these three men, they had parents. They had family members too who put pressure on them.

They had friends who went off and got jobs and became wealthy. They could look at their friends apparently doing better in life than they were doing. Don't think that they faced in any way different pressures from what you faced.

But what a joy it is just to give the whole of your life over to the Lord. Let Him write the script as He chooses. Let me say a word to the teens.

All still at school. What are you going to do with your life? Let me ask that same question to you. You're going to grow up perhaps, maybe, I don't know.

Perhaps work hard at school. Do so that you can have the joy of giving your best back to the Lord. Don't play around with the Christian life.

Live for Christ 100% all that you can. No matter how people may laugh at you at school. No matter if serving Christ sometimes may even surprise or disappoint your parents who are on OM.

The Lord said, you follow Me. You give yourself to proclaiming the kingdom. Don't look back.

Tell these disciples they set off. In chapter 10 they go out on the campaign. They learn all kinds of lessons.

They're sent out in pairs for a start. There used to be days in OM conferences in the summer where we used to move the whole conference out for an afternoon's evangelism. We all used to go down to downtown Brussels and get involved in doing something that we could evangelistically.

All divided up into pairs like the Lord sent them out here. That first conference I was telling you about. I can remember getting up early one morning.

Walking out with my Bible outside the old factory that we were sleeping in. And I was walking past a great big bush. Just quietly meditating on the scriptures.

And suddenly from out of the middle of this bush a Northern Irish voice said, Hallelujah. I looked up and there deep inside this deadly nightshade bush was some fanatical little fella from Belfast. I thought he was a total nutcase.

You could hardly understand his English. And he got up even earlier than me and he got deep into this bush and he was singing and muttering and mumbling and reading verses. And hallelujahing.

Having a sort of Irish quiet time. You know when the entire conference got divided up into pairs to go downtown Brussels I got here. So we went to this street with our arm full of books.

I don't know whether it was a Flemish speaking area or a French speaking area. It didn't make any difference to him. I had a bit of schoolboy French.

Rusty stuff. And I went carefully down my side of the street. And I didn't manage to sell one single book.

He went down the other side of the street and got rid of everything. Just by, yeah you're surprised too, I was. Just by sort of smiling at the people and getting excited and talking in English and I don't know they bought something to send him away I think.

Well he became a real friend of mine in years to come. He's gone home to be with the Lord now. He died of cancer a couple of years ago.

You know being sent out in pairs it binds you together even though at first you might be a long way apart. And the Lord says as you go you pray that there may be more labourers. Leave more labourers behind you wherever you go.

You know some of you have come from Christian homes. You've grown up with Christian parents, you've heard the gospel ever since you were in the cradle. And this kind of Luke 10 experience is vital for you.

To begin to take all the things that you know that you've got stored up in your mind, in your memory and begin to put it into practice, into reality. To allow the Lord to begin to use you even though your knees may be knocking. And before we all went out the Lord said now line up chaps.

Get your money out, get your purses, your wallets out, put them all on the table here before you go. I told you this was like OM. So they all had to take their money out and pile the whole lot up on the table before they went out so they went with nothing.

Why did the Lord do that? I mean they went out without a brass frank on them. They were going to have to trust God weren't they? You see if you're going to go out and talk to other people about putting your faith in God then God maybe wants you to put your faith in Him. So many times God brings afresh into our experience the reality of the gospel we're going out to preach.

You're going to tell people about repentance this summer? Maybe the Lord is first going to speak to you about your repentance. Maybe you're going to have to say sorry to somebody on your team and get reconciled with them. Are you going to tell people that God can be trusted? He is the savior of our souls? And yet in the areas where it really counts you're not trusting Him? How can you be like this? God wants reality in our lives.

If you talk to other people about giving their lives to Christ remember that the Lord is standing beside you on that doorstep. He hears every word you say. Have you given Him your life? He wants these disciples to go out and talk about faith and about believing God in reality.

You'll learn about different kinds of faith this summer. Turn over to chapter 11 of Hebrews. We read of those many characters, friends of God who believed God.

In verse 4 we meet Abel. We see an example of worshipping faith. He was going to worship God in the way God wanted by faith.

And then in verse 7 we see Noah. Who by faith built an ark to save his family. We may call that exploit faith.

By faith he actually accomplished something. He did something that had not been done before. And then from verse 33 onwards.

We read about deliverance faith. People who through faith conquered kingdoms, administered justice, they shut the mouths of lions, they quenched the fury of the flames and escaped the edge of the sword and so on. Women received back their dead, raised to life again.

Others were tortured and refused to be released so that they might gain a better resurrection. People who escaped the most incredible disasters by faith. Deliverance faith.

And then from verse 36 we see something of suffering faith. Others faced jeers and flogging. Others were chained and put in prison.

They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were put to death by the sword by faith. God sent these disciples out in chapter 10 to learn many, many practical experiences. God's people as they have obeyed his word have learnt these same things in the centuries ever since.

And then when we come to Luke chapter 10 verse 17. The 72 come back from the campaign. It's great fun when you see people coming back after their summer months.

Some are thinner, some are fatter. Most look tired. A lot of them are sunburned.

And I just stand quietly off to one side and I watch people who haven't seen each other, you know, for a whole three weeks, meeting each other. Oh, they scream. These disciples, they came back thrilled with what God had done.

God has done for us on our little team just exactly what he was doing for everybody in the big conference. He's answered prayer. We've seen breakthrough after breakthrough in the villages.

How did the Lord react? He listened to all their stories. He nodded. Yeah, there was a sparkle in his eye.

And then he stopped them with a devastating sentence. All this glow of victory was met by a simple quiet warning from Christ. You know, I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.

Satan who had become exalted in his own pride was eventually cast out of heaven. Satan who began to think of his own power and his own glory and his own accomplishments. You and I face colossal spiritual enemies.

Far more clever than all of us put together. And we are to rejoice not in our power and our accomplishments, but in the Lord Jesus Christ. Don't rejoice that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.

How long did it take to write your name? I bet most of you could write your name, probably apart from the Finns, in under two seconds. And the Lord has written your name down in heaven. He does it very quickly.

We need to distinguish in the Christian life between those things the Lord does quickly and those things that he takes a long time to do. He wants to deal with our conscience quickly. He wants to forgive sin quickly.

He does not want you lingering on with any sense of guilt, with an unclean conscience, while you try to do the work of the Lord. When the old Jew brought his sacrifice to the altar at the temple or the tabernacle, blood was shed. And immediately, without waiting, that priest then carried the blood right inside the tabernacle, in, in, in, as far as he could go towards the presence of God.

The person didn't have to wait around outside with a smudgy sort of conscience for a couple of weeks. Because the blood has been shed, your conscience may be clean. You are declared forgiven.

But in, in your character, God will take a long time to work. Your character isn't changed just instantly. But you can be secure in your relationship to him.

We can start and end every day as clean as it is possible for a Christian to be. You may still be battling with things in your character. You want the Lord to bring you through periods of immaturity.

But you can be accepted and embraced in the family of God, made clean by the blood of the Lamb, at a stroke, at a moment. The attitude to success. The Lord says, you, you hang on to those.

Anchor things that your names are written by grace, by God's mercy, by faith, in his book in heaven. And then from verse 21 we see something of the Lord rejoicing in the joys of discipleship. The Lord is on his way to the cross.

Going up to Jerusalem. There to be nailed with those Roman spikes to a splintery bit of wood. He's been rejected from a village.

He's going to, going to his death. And he's rejoicing and praising God as he goes. Now what is he rejoicing about? He says first of all that the Father is the Lord of heaven and earth.

Even the temporary hardships that you go through, they are all, every single one of them, under the control of God. You will see your team tomorrow. What a, what an interesting experience that will be.

Finally look at the people that you're going to spend the next few weeks with. I mean for one or two of you, you may actually finish up spending the rest of your life with them. But I don't want to go on about that too much.

We believe God is in control of putting these teams together. We don't go around the back of the building and take all the names and throw them up into the air and let them flutter down into different boxes. We have asked God to be in charge of every team.

And you may want to really tonight take hold by faith of the fact that God is in control. Even temporary hardships to do with the weather, to do with the vehicle where you stay, the rejection that you may meet, it's all under the control of God. Jesus was rejoicing that His Father was Lord of heaven and earth.

And we can rejoice too in the Son's right to introduce people to the Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father. And no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.

You cannot convict anyone of sin. You never will. I work during the winter months a great deal as an evangelist.

I have never ever in my entire life convicted anyone personally of sin. If I had the power to convict people of sin, I would be a terrible man to live with. Can you imagine if I go... The conviction of sin would come all over them.

My wife would have a miserable time. God doesn't give me that right. He convicts of sin.

When the time is right. Because He knows both sides of the story. He convicts of sin gently.

Wisely. He knows all the case that can be made for the defense. You would be impatient, unkind and cruel.

So our evangelism is a cooperative effort with God. Your job is to preach, to pray, to proclaim, to witness, to distribute literature. And His job is to convict of sin.

Righteousness and judgment. And then He turned to the disciples and He said, Oh, blessed are the eyes that see the things that you can see. Prophets and kings will give their right arms for the things you take so lightly.

King David, the prophet Isaiah, they wish they could have half a fraction of what you take so easily. Don't sing these songs lightly. Don't read of the glory of the Lord in scripture lightly.

As God is going to be training you and molding your character during these months, He wants you to develop this heavenly perspective. He wants you to learn to feed on these things. Jesus Himself, traveling to Jerusalem, was rejoicing in these eternal truths.

Then you come to the parable of the Good Samaritan, which we didn't read. You've launched out in the same way. This Good Samaritan, he took risks, didn't he? The robbers could still be around.

The priest and the Levite, they hurried on by. But the Samaritan was willing to take a risk. Are you? Will you take risks this summer to reach people for Christ? This Samaritan was willing to cross barriers, wasn't he? Not just cross the road to get the poor man mugged in the gutter.

Not just cross the apathy barrier that is a huge thing for so many of us. Cross the cultural barrier. The Samaritan would get off his donkey in order to love a Jew.

We need to learn to cross these cultural barriers just on our teams. My first team had three Arabs, a Dutchman, an American, a Frenchman, an African and me. I'm not sure whether one of them was a believer.

I know that three of them wanted to kill him. The Dutchman would come every morning to our sharing of devotions around God's word with verses that he would dig up out of the back end of the Old Testament about Israel wonderfully getting more of the land. The problem was it was the Arabs' land that they'd just got.

This was in 1967. And after about a week of this, I heard knives being sharpened in the kitchen. It was an utter disaster.

It was an unbelievable team. The American spent most of the month weeping because he felt that God had told him to give up the girlfriend that he was passionately devoted to. The Frenchman was so young and so small, I don't know how he ever got on a ramp.

I used to expect to have to change his nappies in the morning. The only joy... Takes a long time, but it's coming through, you know. The only joy on that team was the African.

Always praise the Lord. Oh, hallelujah. How we ever survived, I don't know.

Well, the Dutchman went. This good Samaritan, he crossed these cultural barriers. And you know the end of the paragraph? You are going to be told, you go and do the same.

This man was willing to pay a price. He brought the poor injured fellow and put him in the care of an innkeeper and he said, I will pay whatever is necessary to see that man brought back to health. Let us go forward into these days in that same spirit.

We find people who have been beaten up by Satan. Who have been hurt and left for dead. People who are lonely and friendless and hurting in their consciences.

And there's a personal cost involved in seeing them brought back to health. A cost in commitment, in prayer, in compassion. And the Lord Jesus our Saviour says to you, there in verse 37, you go and you do the same.

Now what has the Lord been saying to you here during this conference? I want to ask you to take a piece of paper each. Do it now. Borrow something off a friend if you haven't got your own.

And I want you to answer two questions on this paper in a few minutes. Are you ready? You know every great movement of God starts with God speaking himself. God takes the initiative.

It's true of the great movements in history and it's true also of individuals. You think of Joshua. Moses was dead.

And God came and spoke to him. He said to Joshua, now I know you're afraid. I know you think the challenge that lies before you is too great for you, Joshua.

Joshua chapter 1, God says, I will be with you. I will not fail you. I will go with you the whole way.

You are to be strong and of a good courage. You are to be strong and courageous to observe the law of the Lord. You shall meditate on God's word.

Night and day. Now that was an explosive word from God. And that word is what caused the rest of the book of Joshua to come into being.

Without that promise of God, without that commissioning by God himself, Joshua and the people would probably have stayed where they were. It is what God says personally to us that starts new movements, new obedience. New depth in our lives.

You remember the prophet Jeremiah. Jeremiah chapter 1. The word of the Lord came to me, saying, before I formed you in the womb, I knew you. Before you were born, I set you apart.

I appointed you as a prophet to the nations. Ah, sovereign Lord, I said, I don't know how to speak. I am only a child, a young man.

The Lord said, don't say, I am only young. You must go to everyone I send you and say whatever I command you. Do not be afraid of them, for I am with you and will rescue you, says the Lord.

Then the Lord reached out his hand and touched my mouth and said to me, now I have put my words in your mouth. Do you remember times in your life when God has clearly spoken? Particular places where you walked and you did real deep business with God? Do you remember the last time you wept before the Lord? Do you remember when God was last really dealing with your soul? All you wanted was to be obedient to Him. When God speaks to us, that's the beginnings of a new movement of His Spirit in our lives.

Acts chapter 13. Those elders, teachers, prophets were waiting on God. And verse 2, while they were waiting on God, worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.

They were waiting on God. They were ministering to the Lord. They were giving God extra time.

And the Lord spoke to that church in Antioch through those men and it was the beginnings of a whole new missionary movement and we follow in that tradition. Now what has God been saying to you at this conference? Have you heard His voice? Do you know what He's been trying to communicate to you? For the battles that lie ahead? Some of you going to new colleges perhaps? Others going out into new jobs? Some going to join an OM year, two year program? Some of you beginning to drift already into unreality and sin? God is faithful. He warns, He speaks, He prepares us, He challenges.

Always He's faithful. What has God been saying to you at this conference? What has He been challenging your life with? I tell you this for some of you. Before God can ever say, go forth, He needs to say, come back.

You come back to me. I want to do business with you before you ever go out and tell a soul about it. Is your life in the Lord's hands? Are you ready for Him to direct however He likes? Maybe you feel unworthy.

Maybe you don't feel as if you've really got the kind of character or background that could be used by Christ. How do you think Peter felt in John chapter 21, that's the last chapter of the book, that night he'd been out fishing? He had denied Christ. He'd run away in spite of all his proud boasts.

He denied the Lord not once but three times. He was now back at his fishing. The Lord met them by the shore of that lake early that morning.

God was so kind and He fed them. And then the Lord asked Peter three questions. Do you love me? These are the three keys to service of the Lord if you have experienced failure in your life.

If you begin to feel that you've betrayed the Lord or you've been unworthy, the Lord will ask you three questions. Do you really love me? Do you love Jesus? Have you got any love for Jesus? Burning in your heart for Him? How He cares for you, how He provides for you? Have you seen anything fresh of Him this week? He's shown you that for a reason. And He says now, tonight, this Wednesday night, do you love me? And secondly the Lord says to Peter, will you serve others? Will you feed my lambs, will you care for my sheep? And then thirdly He says to Peter, will you accept my plan for your life? Don't you worry what's going to happen to another disciple.

Even if he were to stay alive until the very day I come back, says Christ, that is to be nothing to you. Your life, Peter, will be shortened by crucifixion. Will you live for me? Will you love me and serve others? And accept my plan for your life? Friends, will you let God fill you with His Spirit? Will you let Him fill you with His Spirit tonight? You've heard a call to discipleship.

We've seen evidence while we've been gathered here this week that God answers our prayers. You've heard the teaching of God's Almighty Word. Luke 10, 27 says this, Love the Lord your God with all your heart.

No other affection to take place of Him. Love Him with all your soul, with all your strength, with all your mind. Is there anything at all holding you back from that total commitment to Him, world evangelism, all that He wants in the future? I'm not calling you to give your life to a stranger.

But someone you're coming to know. Someone you're learning to love. Has He ever let you down? Has He ever been less than gentle and kind with you? Isn't He good? Can't you trust Him? Will you give Him your life? Let's deal with those things that hold you back.

Maybe it's a friend back home. Maybe that friend needs to see Jesus more clearly and you're standing in the way. Maybe it's a career.

You want to do something and you've been planning it for years. But look, is there anything better? You tell me. Is there anything better than serving the King of Kings with the rest of your life? Maybe it's just simply to do with money.

Put your bank balance where there is no moth, no inflation, no rust, no corruption. Ask God to deal with you, to fix you, to heal you, to use you, to take you this summer and for the rest of your life.

Christian discipleship is tough. It's realistic. There are deep joys.

Tremendous security. We draw close to God and He promises to draw close to us. There is nothing to compare in life with walking with Him day by day.

I want you to answer these two questions. Write down first what has God been saying to me at this conference. And secondly, what am I going to do in response? We're going to take a time now of silence.

I want at the end of these meetings, if you will, you bring these papers forward. You write them for God to see. Some people choose to sign them.

They feel it better that way. Other people choose not to sign them. It doesn't matter.

It's not for me. Sometimes at these conferences we've asked people all over the building in fresh dedication to the Lord to stand up. We're not doing that tonight.

Sometimes people stand and the next day they don't know quite why they did. I want you to take a few minutes now and to be quiet. Write down what has God been saying to me this conference.

And what am I going to do now in response. Don't look at what other people write. Pray about it as you think.

And let's have silence just for a few moments. Then we'll close tonight with prayer. After I've prayed, people can bring their papers and place them just on the stage at the front.

Some of you may feel even at this stage you really would like someone to come and sit with you, talk with you, pray with you. You may want to seek out your country leader or someone that you know and respect and trust. Tonight or tomorrow.

We want to help you. The Lord calls us to realistic, serious, biblical discipleship. Let us now be quiet before him.

We know the Lord Jesus only said that to you once in scripture and that not long before he went to the cross. But we want to say it tonight. We want to be realistic disciples who keep running to the end of the race.

Not just soldiers for a summer. Lord help us as we respond to your word. Fill us with your spirit.

As we give you the key to not just the front door of our lives but every other door. Lord take us and fill us. Every part.

Help us to walk with you day by day. Help us to see the things that we are seeking to write before you. Thank you that we are yours.

And that you care for us. Lord as we put down on paper the cry of our hearts. We call upon you Lord to by your spirit make these things reality in our being.

For Jesus sake. Amen.

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net