

From Scribe to Disciple

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Transcript

I wanted to share some thoughts on, from what we've heard in the last several weeks, we've heard about having a firm grip on the Christian life, and I want to start by sharing this little couple of verses in Matthew chapter 13. Matthew chapter 13. Matthew chapter 13, verse 51.

Matthew chapter 13, verse 51. Now, have you understood all these things Jesus asked? And they said to him, yes, and this is what Jesus said, okay, if you have understood all these things, every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure things new and old. So that's the little phrase that I want to talk about.

Every scribe must become a disciple, and some people who are living the Christian life are not being taught the right things, they're being taught all kinds of wrong things, and so their life is going in all kinds of wrong directions, because they're being taught the wrong things. They're being taught, for example, that spiritually, that they can just walk wherever they want on the street, that every house on there is supposed to be claimed by them, they can have whatever they want, that God is supposed to make them happy, and wealthy, and rich. And they're completely missing and misusing the words of Scripture.

So there's a reason why they don't have a strong relationship with God, I understand that, we understand that. But for some of us, for us who come to a church like here, where we are taught God's word clearly, and we are taught it accurately, there's a different problem. It may be a worse problem than the ones out there who are believing the wrong things, because we can know that it is the right things for us to believe, but we don't become disciples.

So we end up becoming scribes, but not disciples. A scribe is one who's able to write down all the correct teachings accurately. So if you were to ask them, what are the right things to believe, they will tell you, these are the right things to believe.

A scribe is not somebody who will talk about the prosperity doctrine. A scribe is not somebody who will talk about all kinds of different paths to Jesus. A scribe is somebody who will tell you exactly what is the right way to get to Jesus.

They have studied God's word. They have been taught God's word. They can explain God's word well.

They can have all of those things, but they may not be a disciple. What is the difference between a scribe and a disciple? And what should we do, all of us here, who, let's say, if we listen to the teachings that we hear here today, we can know what it is to have a firm grip on the Christian life. We can know it.

We've been going this over with the children too. What are the five fingers? What's the palm? We've been going through it. Our children are going to know it before they turn 18.

It's going to help them, potentially. They're going to be good scribes. That we can take care of.

But are they going to go from being good scribes to being disciples? That's the question. Now, the children are going to look at the parents and see the parents are being good scribes or they're being disciples. That's going to be the primary way in which they're going to find out.

But so what should we be like to make sure that we don't stop at being scribes? We can fool a lot of people because we can be the best scribes out there. We can speak all the theology from memory. We can know a ton of verses.

We can know all of that in our head. We can know it faster than anybody else, but we may still be good scribes. So what are the things that we need to do? There were two things that I wanted to underline that we need to do to go from being a scribe to being a disciple.

Number one, we have to draw closer to Jesus by obedience. I didn't say that we have to be obedient because there's a reason for that. A scribe can also be obedient, but I don't know if that scribe is drawing closer to Jesus.

If a scribe has to go on the path of becoming a disciple, one thing the scribe has to do is the scribe has to draw closer to Jesus through obedience. And I wanted to share another verse that helps me understand this verse, and it's a beautiful verse that we may all know. It's in Isaiah chapter 40 verse 31.

So you may know this verse, but I want to explain it in a way that has helped me understand what it means to draw closer to Jesus through obedience. Isaiah chapter 40, it's a beautiful chapter, verse 30, you know, a lot of us are looking to get younger. A lot of us wish we had the strength of youth, but you see what it says in verse 30 and 31.

Though youths grow weary and tired, and vigorous young men stumble badly, yet those who wait upon the Lord will gain new strength. And that word wait is the word that I wanted to underline because the way we tend to think about this, and in order for us to become a disciple, the two points that I would say is number one, we need to draw closer to Jesus through obedience. But the second part, I'll give you the second point as well, is we need to have a personal loyal love to Jesus.

Another way of saying it is you've got to be filled with the Holy Spirit. But if I ask myself what does it mean to be filled with the Holy Spirit, this is what it means. I need to have a personal loyal love to Jesus.

That is the filling of the Holy Spirit. And for us to receive the Holy Spirit, God says, I'll baptize you. So in a sense, we're waiting for God to baptize us, we're waiting, the disciples waited in the upper room, we're waiting for God to fill us with the Holy Spirit in a sense.

And who does God fill with the Holy Spirit? Those who are drawing closer to God through obedience. So as we draw closer to God through obedience, not just obeying, there's a big difference between obeying and drawing closer to Jesus in obedience. And that's what I like about this passage here in Isaiah chapter 40, because it says, even for young people can get old.

But this is a different kind of strength that those who wait upon the Lord. And I used to think wait meant, what do you think when you think of waiting? What are you going to do every day when you're waiting? You sit in your room and you read your Bible and you just wait. And you go to work and you just wait.

And you come home and you just wait. And you have your quiet time and you just wait. That's not the kind of waiting that God is talking about here in Isaiah chapter 40 verse 31.

Because that's what I used to think. I used to think all I got to do is just keep on waiting. But that's not what I got from this passage was a different kind of waiting.

And the waiting that I saw in this word was actually intertwining. It's not a passive waiting. Passive means you just stand back and wait.

It's an active waiting. And it blessed me to know, to see also that the way I'm supposed to wait upon the Lord is to draw closer to Jesus in my waiting. And you know, the picture that I get off is a picture of twine and the picture of how twine gets twisted and forms a rope.

And as the twine gets twisted tighter and tighter, it forms a rope. So I thought I had a, I bought a little bit, I got a little bit of twine. I'll show you this.

Right? So this is twine. How, what do you think this has of having strength in it? Children, you can see, do you think this has a lot of strength in this? And all of a sudden these are just little pieces of things. You think this is going to be able to carry an elephant? No chance.

All right. Do you think you're going to be able to control an elephant with this? But you know, in India we do control elephants with ropes. We're able to control an elephant with ropes tied around their legs.

What has happened to these individual twines that were just pieces of twine individually? What did they do? They started getting intertwined with each other. And to me, I felt like this was what the Lord was saying. Those who get intertwined with the Lord.

So I think the way we do it is you've got to split this into two. Here's the Lord and here's me. And I got to intertwine myself with the Lord.

Intertwine myself with the Lord. One after the other. Intertwine myself with the Lord.

Intertwine tighter and tighter. I'm waiting, but is it an empty waiting? No, it isn't. It's an intertwining with the Lord.

It's an intertwining with the Lord. Another word from scripture, an intertwining with the Lord. It's not an active, passive waiting.

And as I intertwine myself, you can see that what is happening is this rope is getting tighter and tighter. And that's what I found that the Lord was asking me to do with these little pieces of string that I can say, Lord, I'm a young person. I'm failing badly.

I've stumbled badly. I don't have strength anymore. I wish I had the strength of these men of God.

What is the strength that the men of God had? This is the strength. They intertwined themselves with the Lord. Here's the Lord.

Here's them. And they said, I'm not going to be just waiting around, sitting for some divine intervention. I'm going to intertwine myself with the word of God to where there's not much difference, where I can't see much of a difference between God and me, where God's word and me have become intertwined with each other.

That's where the strength comes from. And God says, all of these trials were not meant to just tease you, were not meant to perplex you. They were meant to get you to draw closer to Jesus through obedience so that you would intertwine yourself with Jesus so that I would get to know Jesus more and more in a closer way.

And so the trial comes and the trial went. And all I've got left is this little twine. I'm still standing.

The twine isn't broken, but it's missed its purpose. When the trial came, it was a reminder for me to say, intertwine myself with Jesus. Those who intertwine themselves with Jesus will get a different kind of strength that young people who fail don't have.

So it's not about physical age. It's a matter of whether I've been drawing closer to Jesus by intertwining myself with the Lord and His Word, holding fast and stronger to God's Word, even as the trial gets harder. I hope you're reminded of Abraham and Sarah, both of them, year after year, when the evidence was mounting that they were not going to have children, what does it say about them? That they grew strong in faith.

They grew stronger in faith. What does that mean? That they were intertwining themselves with God's Word. So let's say we've been praying for something for a year or two years or five years.

Are you losing your strength? Are we becoming weaker? Are we like Isaiah chapter 40, verse 30, where we say that we're growing weary and tired? Then we've missed the point of it. This was not a passive waiting. This was supposed to be an active intertwining with God's Word.

So as we think about the five fingers, we think about the palm of a solid grip. What does it mean? This is how a scribe has to become a disciple. The scribe needs to intertwine himself.

The scribe has to intertwine herself with these truths that God truly, I seek that God become more and more of my Father to me. That the blood of Jesus really justifies me. That I seek for the Word of God to become living to me.

That the Holy Spirit starts to work from my inside, not just for works, but it starts to make me a different person. That the way of the cross is something that I'm committed to doing every single day, to not just denying my selfish will, but having a fundamental hatred to my selfish will, to the same hatred and disgust that I have for the toilet, for the sewage. That's the path that God wants me to have towards my selfish will that is an enemy of God lying within me.

My body hates all of the things that it cannot use and it seeks to excrete it. It tries to get rid of it. Our bodies have been built this way.

And we, when we see the selfishness inside of us, we should have the same spiritual response that our physical bodies have to get rid of it. It's junk. And every day God's asking us, take your cross, get rid of this selfishness that is within you.

It is of the same constitution as the stuff that we're trying to excrete and get rid of. It's filthy. My body wants nothing to do with it.

That is the way that we ought to think of our selfish will, this will that says, I want it my way. I want to hold on to unforgiveness. I want to live by my feelings.

I must just not deny it. I must grow in my hatred for it. If my marriage is not going well, if things are not going well at work, it's one thing to say, I've got to deny myself.

But do I hate that attitude in me that is causing my marriage to not go well? For words to come out of my mouth that shouldn't come out, do I not just deny myself, do I hate it? And God's keeping on asking me, look, when you pick up your cross, your cross, you're picking up your cross. It's not just for a denial of self. You can shut the door, kick him out and shut the door.

Then you've denied self. No, you got to grab self and kill it. That's why you're grabbing your cross.

And so there must be such a hatred towards the selfishness within me. And the last thing of having fellowship, fellowship, the body of Christ, that it's more than just me. I should have that intertwining myself with God's word.

It's an active obedience that I must be doing if I want to grow from a scribe to being a Pharisee, sorry, from a scribe to being a disciple, otherwise I'll end up being a Pharisee. Intertwine myself with Jesus through obedience. It's not cold obedience.

It's seeking to find Jesus. As I'm intertwining myself, Jesus is who I'm looking for. But then at the end of the day, I can't get there if I just have an intertwining because then it would just be my works.

Dear brothers and sisters, we need to have a personal, loyal love for Jesus. I thought about this. I can stay loyal to my wife with my eyes because of the command that says, do not lust.

Or I can stay faithful with my eyes to my wife because I love my wife. I had no problem being faithful to my wife the very first day I got attracted to her. And the very first day I wanted to marry her, I had no problem being faithful with my eyes.

I wanted to do it out of my love for her. But what ends up happening in a lot of marriages is it goes, even if we are keeping our marriages together, we've gone from being faithful in my eyes because I love my wife to being faithful with my eyes because there's a command and I don't want to upset God. It's definitely better than committing adultery, let's be clear, but that's not the way the Lord wants us.

There are many Hindus and many other religions that will tell you, yeah, you can also be faithful. Yoga, meditation, other things can get you there. Yes.

But Lord, I want this love for my spouse to be maintained and that to be the reason why I don't lust with my eyes. Similarly, I can choose to be gentle and gracious with my tongue because there's a command that says be gentle and gracious with your tongue. I know what that looks like.

I've tried to do that. But it's a different kind of life if I'm gentle and gracious with my tongue because I love my wife. Our spousal relationships can change drastically if we see, Lord, the top of the mountain is not obeying your commands.

When I have a personal loyalty because of love, then it's not a strain, then it's not a burden. I'm still obeying, but it's from a completely different source. All of us who are married understand this.

All of us who are married understand this. You understand, some of you who have been faithful to keep your tongue under control. That's better than letting your tongue go loose, for sure.

But is there a higher way? Is there a highest? Absolutely, we'll all agree if you can say, Lord, I wish I could love my spouse where it comes out of a personal loyalty to my spouse. Not because there's some command saying this is the best way to do it. Similarly, I think as it relates to Jesus, God is saying the top of the mountain is not obeying my commands.

If you love me, you'll obey my commands, not if you obey my commands that proves that you love me. It's the other way around. So what I'm saying is, just because we obey God's commands doesn't prove automatically that we love him.

We could obey God's commands out of our dead work. So I must always make the top of the mountain, Lord, I want to have a personal loyalty to you. We have personal loyalties to some people in our lives, so you can relate it to that.

It may be to your children. You'll defend your children when other children are trying to attack them. You'll defend your children to some of your best friends when your best friend's kids try to mess up their stuff.

It comes up within us, this personal loyalty. And what the Lord is asking me, what the Lord is asking us is, I don't desire burnt offerings. I don't desire obedience that comes through just bland sacrifice.

I desire loyalty. That's the word in Hosea 6.6. Hosea 6.6, he says, I desire loyalty. I desire the loyalty that comes from love.

And Jesus gave us a new command, love one another as I have loved you. See how I'm loving you. Draw closer to me.

That's that bond of the way I love you. That's the way you love other people. And what I want is I want to show you is my loyalty to you.

And so what I'm asking of you is loyalty, not obedience most of all. Obedience is a good starting point. We must definitely draw closer to God through obedience.

We must definitely obey the commands, but we're in a dangerous place. We're not yet become a disciple if we're a scribe who are just obeying the commands. We need to see that there's a higher plane than that, which is a personal loyalty of love to Jesus.

God alone can give this to me. This is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that we need to seek. Dear brothers and sisters, this is the baptism of the Holy Spirit that our marriages badly need.

Some of us may have good marriages. Some of us may have bad marriages. I don't know.

Whether we have good marriages or bad marriages, we may not have godly marriages. And a godly marriage, a spirit-filled marriage, is where all is done out of love. The loyalty, a personal loyalty of love is there.

Similarly, we may have good people obeying the commands of God, and we may have some people who are not obeying the commands of God in this church. Within marriages, within the church. Definitely we should be seeking to obey the commands of God.

But what about once we start obeying the commands of God? We must be so intertwined with God because we love God. And we ask God, God, I don't want to stop seeking you until you baptize me and you keep baptizing me in your love to where I get this personal loyalty to Jesus. That the things of this world don't attract me like they used to anymore because I have a personal loyalty to Jesus.

So you don't need to wait for the Holy Spirit to intertwine yourself with God and His word. You can start right now. Intertwine yourself with God's word that says, be anxious for nothing.

Intertwine yourself with God's word that says, forgive everyone of their faults. Intertwine yourself with Jesus as you read the command, do not lust or do not commit murder, do not get angry, or whatever they are. Intertwine yourself with Jesus.

Say, Jesus, I want to know you. Jesus, I want to know you. Lord, and I want to show you that I want to know you because I'm obeying the commands.

What I'm after, what I'm after is such unity with you, such union with you, such knowing of you, such a knowledge of you, because that will give me a personal loyalty. And then when we pray, our prayer will be, Lord, hallowed be your name. Because I have such a radical loyalty to Jesus.

And I say, Lord, your kingdom come, because I'm so loyal about His kingdom. Your will be done. You know, I saw this piece of rope.

It's very different. I mean, it's intertwined too. But this is an intertwining that's gone so much deeper.

Got so much deeper. It almost looks like there's a glue in between it. And I said, Lord, I want the strength of these true, true ropes that have been intertwined so deeply that there's that loyalty.

Nothing can separate me from the love of God. And this rope obviously becomes bigger and bigger and bigger, thicker and thicker and thicker as I intertwine it, intertwine myself. And then God gives us the Holy Spirit as that glue that can only glue these pieces of rope together.

It is possible. There's no limit to what God can do. There's no limit to what God can glue together.

But he's asking, how many strands will you bring to the table? How many times will you intertwine yourself with you? Bring as many strands as you come to intertwine yourself with me and my word, I'll make it thicker and thicker. So the difference between a godly man who's been walking with the Lord for 50 years and another man who's been walking as a Christian for 50 years is one has intertwined himself with the Lord and has also realized that that's not the top of the mountain and has gone with his intertwined rope and said, Lord, I want something much more than that. I want a personal loyalty to you.

The loyalty I had when I first became a Christian, the loyalty that Paul had when he was knocked off his road to Damascus. Lord, if you can do it for Paul, you can do it for me. So I don't want to stop short and I want to keep seeking for the baptism of the Holy Spirit, but I'm going to prove it by intertwining myself with Jesus, obeying his word every day.

We need the Holy Spirit to make Jesus very personal to us. So I can know the palm that God is my father. Well, is he my father? I see how my children come up so readily to me because I'm their dad.

Other children don't. My children do because they're my dad, because I'm their dad. Sorry.

Do I have that same relationship with Jesus? If I don't, Lord, I need it. If I don't seek for your word as a living word, I must intertwine myself with God and say, God, I'm going to do everything I can. But I need you to do the rest.

And I want a personal loyalty to you that will make this life not burdensome. And he can do it. He alone can do it.

God wants to transform our personal lives. God wants to transform our marriages to not a marriage where we obey the commands. Not where we just are both dying to each other.

God's given me a vision for a different marriage. God's given me a different vision for a different personal life. God's given me a marriage, a vision for a different church where it's not just dying to self, but so loyal to God.

So loyal to my wife that I'm her biggest advocate. I'm her biggest advocate. Can we have hope for that, married couples? I am your biggest advocate so that you can be like Jesus.

I'm not going on my tongue that's going to criticize you, that's going to pout at you, that's going to give you the silence treatment. I'm your biggest fan. So even if you mess up a million times, I'm your biggest fan.

I have hope for that. I have hope for that in my own life. I'm not there yet, but I have hope for that.

Some of you, you may need to rekindle that hope that we can have marriages like that, that we can have a church like that, that we advocate for other people in the same way, that we can have a personal life where there's a personal loyalty to Jesus. Not a theology, not a doctrine, but it's personal. Ask any mother, ask any father, if you're not married, what's the kind of loyalty you have towards your children? Do you use words to describe it? No.

It goes way deeper than words and pictures and songs. Way deeper than that. And I want that loyalty to the Lord Jesus Christ.

God can do that for us. May God help us.

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