

Four Lessons From the Disciples

by Shane Idleman

Shane Idleman explores four key lessons from the lives of the disciples, emphasizing the importance of humility, faithfulness, and the true cost of discipleship in ministry.

Duration: 55:59

Scripture: 1 Samuel 15:23, Galatians 5:19

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Humility"

Description

This sermon delves into four key lessons from the disciples, focusing on the importance of self-examination, humility, perseverance, and addressing rebellion. It emphasizes the need for honest reflection, humility, and surrender to God's authority to experience true spiritual growth and power.

Transcript

I'm going to talk to you tonight on the topic of four lessons from the disciples. And guess what? These are not new lessons. But I want to kind of hit some of these from a different angle.

And kind of be able to take away something from the lives of the disciples. And where we find ourselves is in Matthew chapter 10. And we left off, as you know, last week.

If you weren't here, go back and listen to last week's message. The call of Jesus. The call of Jesus Christ to the ministry.

Matthew chapter 9 verse 37. This is where we left off last week. And he said to the disciples, The harvest truly is plentiful, but the labors are few.

Boy, isn't that true? The harvest is plentiful, but the labors are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out labors into the harvest. It's one thing to be a Christian, but it's another thing to go out and actually do work in the ministry.

And not just, you don't have to be in the ministry full time. Just everywhere you go is ministry. I mean, I realize that this week, everywhere I went, I went to pick up a door that we fix over at the place where they're fixing the door.

And ministering to the guy, inviting him to church. And then over at this cafe or this waitress. I mean, it's everywhere.

It's amazing. If we allow it to be there. But many times we don't want to minister, right? I just, don't bother me today, Lord.

I just need to relax. And we need some relaxing days. But if you just look around, the field is everywhere.

And a lot of times you'll reach people that I won't. I'll never speak to them. But you will.

And that's where this whole verse comes into play. And how do we measure success, usually? This isn't working. I quit.

We talked about that last week. The American church, we've created this, you know, capitalism. And, you know, the American pride.

And we can just do everything. But when it comes to ministry, we hear this often. It's just not working.

I quit. I give up. And yeah, many times we don't see that.

We're just planting the seeds. But we want to plant the seed. We want to stay in water.

And we want to see the fruit tree come up. And we want to eat of the fruit. But that's not ministry.

Ministry is planting the seeds. And God wants to watch our heart. Because in ministry, you're never not succeeding.

If you're witnessing. If you're ministering in the power of the Holy Spirit. You don't see immediate fruit.

And what happens? We get frustrated. And speakers do this. I used to gauge it all the time.

Is there a thousand people there? I'm a success. If there's a hundred. Oh, what happened? Lord.

I'm sure saying, you silly boy. Success is in quality. And what you're doing with one person.

Or two. Or three. Or four.

And I guess maybe it's just my vantage point. But I see people give up a lot. And they say, this isn't working, Shane.

I quit. I can't do this anymore. And I actually had lunch this week.

With a guy who's in ministry to the Muslims. In Afghanistan, Pakistan. And he's not getting any support from the churches.

And I met with him. And I'm going to get him kind of plugged in here. Because he's got a great ministry.

But he just wanted to give up. Because the churches aren't supporting him. And that's why I said, you've got to get plugged in with the church.

Because if you just go knock on a church. And say, hey, I'm doing this. That raises a red flag sometimes.

We don't know you. We can't invest to a ministry we don't know. But he was telling me about everything he was doing.

In safe houses. And sending Bibles back there. And I'm thinking, you're giving up? That's success.

But how we measure that success. I thought I was going to do this. TV ministry.

Thousands of people. Well, hold on. Let's remove our idea of success.

And put in God's idea of success. Because if all you're doing is, Lord, whatever you want me to do. I'll minister.

I'll clean the restrooms. I'll pick up trash. I'll empty this.

I'll go here. I'll say whatever you want me to do. You don't feel like quitting.

Because there's strength in that. Humility. There's strength in serving.

But it's when we say, well, I want to do this. And if it doesn't turn out like this. And if I'm not here by then.

Then it's not working. God says, well, you better go this direction. Down the narrow road.

Down the path of humility. Because that's where fulfillment comes from. And I saw it.

I mean, this happened early in my ministry. When God opened tremendous doors. And then I go into small churches with 12 people.

I would travel out to out by Palm Springs. I don't remember. Something like that.

Yucca Valley. And then North Edwards. And they would have me going and preaching.

Many times 20, 25, 30, 40 people. Little churches. But the spirit of God was there.

The power of God and the worship. And saying, Lord, wherever you want to use me, people will be getting saved. It's just amazing.

But once I had to re-program my definition of success. Because we all do that. We put numbers on it.

Open a business. You better be profiting. Open a church.

You better be growing. Do a ministry. You better be speaking to lots of people.

Start a ministry. You better get recognition. Start a Bible study.

We see this a lot too. People have 20 people show up. 25 is going great.

And then guess what happens as the weeks go by? Three people. Saying, this isn't working. Oh, yes it is.

You see, how you measure success isn't working. But God will sometimes strip it down to one person. And say, let me test your heart.

Because he was faithful in the little things. I will make him ruler over much, over many. And how else does God test our heart? Because it's very easy to say, Lord, wherever you want to send me, if you shrink the church down, if you shrink my ministry down to one person, no matter what, that sounds great when everything is going good.

The class is starting Monday, right? This coming Monday. Men, grief share, there might be where it gets down to one or two. And he'll use that to mold and shape us.

I know when I start the Monday study again in October, I'll be preaching on Mondays. It's great turnout the first night. Second Monday.

Third Monday. Fourth Monday. You're down to 50%.

Sometimes 75% of what happened. What doesn't matter? Because God uses that to measure. He doesn't measure by numbers.

He measures it by faithfulness. Now on the flip side, a healthy church should be growing. I mean, there's nothing wrong with that.

We can't take pride in our decreasing and saying, well, we're the frozen chosen and it's just us four and there's the door if you don't believe us. Because we're right to the core. I've seen churches get real small.

Well, that's because we're preaching the gospel, brother. Everybody else isn't, but we are. And it's just us 25 people.

And that's why we're so small. And usually that's not good either. They never make a dent into the community.

They don't want to invite people to church. It's just us and our community. But God said, go out.

Get out and minister. So let that just be an encouragement. I remember when I first released my first book, there was a publisher involved.

And she said, okay, we want to just see if you can speak to people. And I said, okay, that's a good idea. Well, here's where you're going to be.

Grace Resources. We've got about 12 people homeless right now and they need some health advice. That's not what I had in mind.

And it was a wonderful two hours. I mean, these people, it was great. But once you get your mindset out of that definition of success, because God's got to pound it out of you.

Now you're ready. Now if you'll go wherever I'll send you, now I can use you. But when you've got these high lofty ideas where you want to be up on center stage, you want your name on the PowerPoint, you want to lead this and you want to lead that, I can't use you now because you're doing it in your own flesh and your own strength.

But when you humble yourself and you submit to my will and say, Lord, wherever you send me, if there's somebody on Beach Avenue that needs to hear your word, I will walk up and down that street to proclaim the gospel. It'll be difficult, it'll be tough, but the power of the Holy Spirit is there. And that's where fulfillment is.

You cannot discourage somebody like that very easily. Because they'll go out, they'll minister and they'll say, that was wonderful. I don't care what happened, God's in control, not me.

And I just see it all the time. And my heart breaks for people who measure success by numbers. Or worse yet, by revenue.

I mean, that's good in the business world. You're not going to make it. But in ministry, if you're trying to get involved in something and get on a marketing this and a money schemes and all this and try to make some money out of it, that's not good.

And we get frustrated with that as well. That's what I talked about last week. I don't want to spend too much time on it, which I already did.

But you got the point, right? The key is, how do we measure success? How do the disciples measure success? God, however you want to use me. Be careful. That's a dangerous prayer.

It got me up here. I like traveling. I'm back in the airport.

Just go, go. So be very careful. But it's the most fulfilling life you'll ever know.

But you have to mean it. How do you want to use me? That might mean ministering to those caught in sex trafficking, gone through an abortion, care net, grace resources. They're looking for people to help the churches to put together things to go and feed the homeless over there.

I mean, there's tons of opportunities. If you want to do something, just let us, the leadership, know. We know there's plenty of needs.

Actually, there's too many needs. And we can't quite get to them all. So keep that in mind.

Now, we're in chapter 10. This is interesting because it lists all the disciples. And when we talk a lot about the fate of the disciples, you have to realize that we only know the fate of two according to Scripture.

So I don't... The fate of the rest of the disciples has been carried down. And you can call it tradition. You can call it Josephus, one of the Jewish historians, records some of these things.

Greek historians, Roman historians. So the tradition carries weight because many of these disciples went out and they did missions. And from those missions, churches were planted.

And they remember those disciples. So the only record we have of really what happened to these guys is Judas Iscariot, right? Not good. Do any people have named their kids Judas recently? No? Me neither.

Well, just keep that in mind. We know what his fate is. What's the other fate? We know that James, the son of Zebedee, was executed by Herod in about 44 A.D. And then you'll see there in chapter 10 he lists the disciples.

And of course, he doesn't list Paul yet because Paul is later on. We'll get to that as we study further into Acts and different things. But when Judas was killed, they said, well, Scripture must be fulfilled that there's 12 of us, let's cast lots.

They chose Matthias, Matthias, whatever you want to say it. But later on, Paul comes on the scene and Christ calls him directly and knocks him off his beast. And so there's a discussion there.

Well, did they act prematurely? Well, we've got to do this. And that happens a lot. Doesn't it? Well, God's not happening.

There's 12. This isn't happening quick enough. Let me make this happen.

God says, no, no, no, that didn't work. But we don't know that for sure. Matthias, he was obviously a disciple, obviously did some good things.

But Paul was the one that looks like Christ chose to be that 12th disciple. But look at what happened to them. Peter and Paul were both martyred in Rome about 66 A.D. during the persecution under Emperor Nero.

And if you guys don't have a book called Fox's Book of Martyrs, I'd recommend that book highly. Fox's Book of Martyrs. I don't know if you want to read it before you go to bed, but you want to read it and it will make you understand how precious the Gospel is.

Number one. Number two, how thankful we should be in this nation. Instead of criticizing it, sometimes we need to say, oh Lord, thank You for it.

Lord, thank You so much. Would you turn the Titanic around? It's been struck. Everything, all kinds of filth and perversion is filling into the oceans and our society, but Lord, we believe and revive.

I do. I'm not just telling you guys that and going home and saying something else. I believe that God can revive His people.

He can return the wayward church. And sometimes it's good to be disgruntled at the condition of the church, because from that disgruntledness comes prayer and fasting. Without that, we wouldn't do anything.

Oh, the church is doing great. We don't need to do anything. Let's just go to In-N-Out Burger after the service.

But we say, Lord, we're in dire straits according to Your Word. I mean, when you look at this, and look at Facebook, or look at this, look at the news, or look at this and see the direction of the church. It's like, uh-oh.

Wow, this is not good. This is not good. These are dire times that we're living in.

But, there's hope and there's encouragement. But I don't want to get off on that rabbit trail. So let's look at this.

Paul was beheaded. Peter was crucified upside down at his request, since he did not feel worthy to die in the same manner of his Lord. Andrew went on to what is now the Soviet Union.

Christians there claim that he was the first to bring the gospel to their land. He also preached in Asia Minor, Turkey and in Greece, where he is said to have been crucified. Doubting Thomas, remember him? Tradition has him preaching as far as India, where the ancient Christians revere him as their founder.

They claim that he died there when he was pierced through with the spears of four soldiers, because of the truth. Philip ministered in North Africa, Asia Minor, where he converted the wife of a Roman proconsul. In retaliation, he had Philip cruelly put to death, because of the truth.

You see consistency here? We think we're just going to wiggle out of problems because of the truth? Isn't it interesting? Oh, Philip built a nice house in Samaria. 4,000 square foot. Had a nice lap pool in the back and jacuzzi and grapevines hanging down and had lots of parties there.

We just don't read any of that. Sometimes I wish we did, but Philip ministered in North Africa, Asia Minor. We read that.

Matthew, the tax collector and writer of the Gospel, ministered in Persia and Ethiopia. See, what God did is he sent them out. Israel started in Israel and then he spread them out, up Asia Minor and into Greece and Rome and all these in Italy.

Matthew, some of the oldest reports say that he was not martyred, while others say that he was stabbed to death in Ethiopia because of the truth. Bartholomew had widespread missionary travels and various accounts of how he met his death as a martyr for the Gospel. James, one of at least three Jameses referred to in the New Testament, the Jewish historian Josephus reported that he was stoned and then clubbed to death because of the truth.

Simon, the zealot, ministered in Persia and was killed after refusing to sacrifice to the sun god. Matthias was the apostle chosen to replace Judas. Tradition sends him to Syria with Andrew and to death by burning.

What happened to your best life now? What happened to all your problems will be washed away? What happened with everybody's going to like you and love you? What happened to that? Because, see, I believe we need to count the cost. We need to tell people the truth. If you think for a minute that I'm going to tell my kids that Christianity is a cakewalk, you've got another thing coming.

Because you prepare them for battle. That's what's happening, I believe. A lot of these kids are going into our universities unarmed, untrained, and unprepared for a secular humanist professor who just guns them down.

And life gets challenging, it gets difficult, and they just give up. But you've got to prepare the soldier for battle. You think a marine just shows up and they say, okay, here you go, here's your badge and your gun and we're going to send you here.

Have you heard of something called boot camp? Where I was watching some of the Navy SEAL training? Wow! I would just tell you up front, I don't think I would make it at my age. There's no way. When they try to get you to quit, drowning, freezing, and then they whittle down from whatever the number is down to half of that.

And then from that, even less of that. Why? Because you're going to go sell cupcakes? Well, think about that. Parallel is Christianity.

Paul says, fight the good fight, be a good soldier. Where in the world do we come up with this idea that it's a cakewalk, that we're going to live in mansions and drive wonderful cars and everybody's going to love us? I think somebody in the Bible said, count the cost. I think that somebody was Jesus.

What man before building a building would not count the cost? What king would go to war without first counting the cost? You might say, well, Shane, that's a little discouraging. How are you going to get people to come to the gospel? Well, you tell them they're on the road to hell and there's a Savior. If that doesn't wake them up, nothing will.

But what we try to do is, come on, you'll love Jesus, just try Him out. Your life will be great. Would you just try Him out? Just raise your hand or say a prayer with me.

Gosh, I can't hurt, right? I mean, I'm going through a lot right now. Is He going to help me out? I want to say, no, maybe not. It might get difficult before it gets better.

There might be a storm before the calm. There might be a fight before the victory. That's what the Bible says.

If you can tell people the truth, they go into it armed and prepared and ready for battle. Now, I don't want to paint this grim, hard, the blessings of God I love as well. I mean, I can sit and give an hour sermon on the blessings of God.

The power of God to redeem, to set free, to renew, to financial blessings, relational blessings, setting us free, opening tremendous doors. That's great. But we can't walk through life expecting just the roses.

Lord, Lord, even if you don't do that, I will still follow you. But if you do, I would really appreciate it. And that's a balanced view of Christianity.

If you look at the Bible, it costs Christ His life. Think about that. Christianity costs Christ His life.

Not just something quick beheading. I mean, that was painful, that cross. If you read exactly what the scourging did, the whipping did, the crown of thorns.

I mean, that right, just a crown of thorns, I'm done. Stick some big nails, start thorns in my head and scalps, and I start bleeding down my face. Taking that off and these soldiers are done.

Remember, I've said that before. But what He endured, the cross, it cost Him something. So I get a little offended when people think sin's no big deal, Christianity's no big deal.

It's warfare. People want to kill us because of what we believe. It's that light and darkness, it's that struggle.

So let's look at the lessons from the disciples. And we've talked about all these before, but I want to take a little bit different approach. And I want to throw out another book that I just read, finished last week.

It's called, If You Bite and Devour One Another. And get ready to be convicted. If you bite and devour one another.

And it talks, the whole book is on the feeding the flesh in the church. And biting and devouring and gossiping and being critical and tearing each other down. The whole book.

And it gives examples in churches, examples in ministries. And I've seen it here. I mean, we're all susceptible to the lust of the flesh, pulling at us.

It's by Alexander Straw. I hope I pronounced his last name right. S-T-R-A-U-C-H If You Bite and Devour One Another.

It's a great resource. But the first lesson we obviously get, and you see I was pointing out in all the examples I gave. Oh, I didn't mention John, did I? John, of course, the only one who is generally thought to not have died by martyrdom, but by natural death.

And this is the John that was exiled to the island of Patmos and wrote the book of Revelation. And lest you think that life was easy. Nope.

Exiled on that island. Even tradition says he was thrown in a pot of boiling oil. Made it.

And then, why? Because of the truth. And that's where we see the lies of the disciples. So the first lesson I gleaned from this and I hope we all can, is this lesson of truth.

They died for the truth. And this is significant. This is what you should tell other religions, doubters.

These people did not die for a lie. You think they went around proclaiming God's message and were killed? Because they knew we really hid the body. We're just not telling anybody.

Think about that. You're going to be stoned. You're going to be clubbed to death.

You're going to be hung upside down. You're going to be crucified. You're going to be martyred because you know that you're telling a lie? Heck no.

As soon as the Roman soldiers came and said, oh we made it up. We made it up. Here's the body.

Here's what happened. We're not. But to go and actually die for a lie, they didn't.

They died for the truth. So one of the things we can learn from the disciples is this element of truth. And you're going to hear this a lot in the culture today.

This whole thing of truth. Speaking the truth in love. And people don't want to hear it.

But that's one of the first lessons that I glean from. Is that truth must be reinforced. Truth must be encouraged.

And truth must be nurtured. Truth either grows or withers depending on whether we are feeding it or starving it. Just like sin, right? Truth plays the same role here.

Truth must be reinforced. What I mean by that is how are you going to reinforce truth? MTV? No? Fox News? O'Reilly? Hannity? Coulter? CNN? What about CNN? Larry King? Are they going to reinforce truth? Of course not. How do we reinforce truth? Right here.

That's why I preach on it all the time. We'll continue to. Because someday we're going to get it.

Someday we're going to say, listen, I've been in the Word all week. I can't believe the change in my life. You reinforce it.

You're either reinforcing error or you're reinforcing truth. And you wonder why truth seems distanced because you're reinforcing error. I mean, I just walked into a place this week and they had these crime shows on where there's dead bodies laying on this thing and they're trying to investigate how the person died.

I'm like, how can you even watch this? I mean, I'm not prudish. I've got a pretty hard stomach. But I'm like, what's the point? You just sit at home all day long and watch this stuff.

And you wonder why truth has fallen, why you have no passion for truth, no passion for God. Because truth must be reinforced. It's leaving on a daily basis.

Guess what? You've got to bring it home. You've got to bring it back into your mind. That's why these books I'm reading, the Bible, get into those at night.

Read those instead of all this other stuff that's pulling you away from God. And I see a lot of you guys, some people in here, especially nationally, but they send me all kinds of blogs and articles. You've got to read this.

You've got to read this. You've got to read this. You know, it's somebody from the former CIA or the intelligence or the government.

They used to work in the military. All this conspiracy and all this stuff. It's just mind-boggling.

Mind-boggling. You wonder why they're wavering in their faith. Why they're in fear factor mode.

Because they're not reinforcing the truth. They're reinforcing all this stuff that we ought not be concentrating on. So truth must be reinforced.

What does that word reinforce mean? You guys know in construction, right? Reinforcement. Reinforce. Sometimes you put something in the ground, it's being pulled out, it's not holding a fence post, whatever it is, you've got to reinforce it.

So you dig all the way around it, pour tons of concrete and let that thing sit overnight. You're not hitting that over with a car. Let alone some gust of wind.

You're reinforcing it. So the battle in our culture 50 years ago, you might have got away with not as much Bible. But today, in this culture, with all the junk that's coming in, the mind gate, and everything is battling against the truth.

Everything going, I mean, we start to say, this is a sin. People in the church say, no, no, it's not. No, no, it's not.

You don't know the truth. Oh, maybe I don't. We just keep backing down.

So truth must be reinforced. So let me tell you right now, if you are dying on the vine spiritually, if what I'm saying is irritating, right? If you're like, I don't know anymore. You've got to go and reinforce it.

Reinforce it. I mean, think about the kids, right? They're not getting the word of God in them. They're getting vampires, they call it witchcraft, all this stuff they're watching.

They wonder why I'm denying the truth, mom and dad. Well, yeah, of course. It hasn't been reinforced.

You don't plant truth here and it just stays here forever. You've got to continually be meditating and reading upon the word of God. That's why D.L. Moody said, right, I'm a leaky vessel.

Guess what's leaking out? Truth, the filling of the spirit, all that, you know, you go into time of prayer and fasting and it's leaking out by the next day. By the next day in traffic and at work and stressed out and all these problems, it's gone. So many people just coast.

Oh, I'll just wait till church. Oh, Lord. That's not enough.

I could stay up here for three hours and that's not enough because you've got to offset the pull. The flesh and the spirit are against each other. Truth must be reinforced.

Truth must be encouraged. Truth must be encouraged. So stop reading things that discourage truth.

Stop hanging around people that discourage truth. Stop hanging around whatever's happening in your life. Is it encouraging the truth of God's word or is it discouraging you? Truth is either encouraged or it's discouraged.

And it must be nurtured. You know what that word is. You can picture a loving mom just having a newborn child.

She nurtures that truth. And truth must be guarded. How do you guard truth? Well, once you put it in your heart, you've got to guard your heart.

By everything I'm saying, if you don't know what I'm saying, go back and click last year's sermon and the sermon before that and the sermon before that, all the way till you get caught up. We've got hundreds of sermons up there now. That's how you nurture the truth.

It must be heard. Truth must be heard. That's why I said if you're dying spiritually, if you're dying spiritually, if you're feeling distant from God, don't raise your hand, but if that's you, if darkness and depression are reigning in your heart, maybe truth has fallen.

That imagery there, right? Maybe that's what happened. It's happened in your life. I can't believe you did that, Shane.

Truth has fallen. Many of our lives, right? Again, maybe it's my vantage point. The people I counsel, the people I talk to, truth has fallen.

And then I turn right to Isaiah 59. We look for light, but there's darkness. For brightness, but we walk in blackness.

We grope for the wall like the blind. And we grope as if we have no eyes. We stumble at noonday, even though it's twilight.

We are dead men in desolate places. We all growl like bears and moan sadly like does. We look for justice, but there is none.

For salvation, but it is far from us. And then what's the next sentence say? Because truth has fallen in the streets. When the God's people reject the truth, that's the outcome.

When they distance themselves from truth, that's the outcome. So if it's fallen, what's the solution? Pick it up. Exactly.

That's what I love about God. I don't just say, two bad guys, get out of here. You're done.

Toast. I don't have any hope for you. Secular psychologists don't have any hope for you.

The therapists don't have any hope for you. Dr. Phil, Oprah, they don't have any hope for you. They have no hope.

Let's just sit down and talk about it. Maybe we can work it out. We can pinpoint something back in your childhood.

Yeah, it's called sin. So all you have to do is pick up the truth. Not obviously physically, but sometimes physically.

Pick it up and embrace it again. The one thing about God, and that's why sometimes these messages are similar, because it's not, oh, 50 different things and 100,000 different things. It's just return.

Are you distant? Would you return? Are you far from me? Return. Draw close to me. It's just God's answer.

Come on. Come on back. Come on back.

So that's why I'm always saying come on back. It's that easy. That was the solution.

Truth has fallen in the street. So Isaiah said pick up the truth. Call on God again.

Reread His Word. Get into His Word. Let a broken, humble heart and repentance bring you back to a loving Father.

The quickest solution for a depressed mind is to stop everything you're watching and viewing and who you're listening to and go take a long drive with the Word of God and some worship. I don't want to do that. Well, what's that tell you? I'll tell you why, because there's a battle going on.

The flesh loves that. The Spirit's saying, come on, let's go do this. You go up into a cabin someday with nothing but the Word of God to eat, nothing to drink but water and the Holy Spirit, and you'll either break out of there or you'll have a breakthrough, because you're confronting, you're going to God and saying, listen, I take you to Your Word.

I'm going to seek You with all of my heart. I'm going to pick up truth. I'm going to embrace it again.

I'm going to run to You. Not walk casually. Lord, I'm running to You.

That's what embracing truth is, and that's what's turning to truth is. The second lesson we can learn from the disciples is one that, again, our culture has lost sight of, and that is this issue of perseverance. Right? Perseverance.

I've got a lot of Scriptures I was going to go through, but time isn't going to allow me to do that. But it's interesting, and Peter, he's talking about, Peter, right? We just read about Peter. He's talking about this divine power has given us everything we need for godly living.

And sometimes we say, yeah, that's good. But then you've got to keep reading, right? Remember the paragraphs and the chapter numbers and all that was just added 500 years ago. You're used to sit down and read Peter as you'd read a letter.

But sometimes, oh, look at that nugget of truth. I'm going to embrace that. But you've got to keep reading.

He says, for this very reason, because of this, for this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness, and the goodness knowledge, and the knowledge self-control, and the self-control perseverance, and the perseverance godliness, and the godliness mutual affection. They will keep you.

They will keep you from being infected and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Those things, so we can't just claim a promise without obedience. Many people do that. I have the promises of God, but I'm living like hell.

I've got the promises of God, but I'm not experiencing Him. Well, because you're giving up on everything. There's no commitment.

There's no self-control. There's no knowledge of getting into God's. It's just holding on to a promise.

But a promise has to be backed with action. They're married. That's what Peter said here.

They will keep you. These things, perseverance. And many never experience this divine power of God because they lack perseverance.

In Christianity, it's funny, an athlete, tons of perseverance, right? You want to talk about what an Olympic athlete does in the course of a year? You think they're a nutcase, fanatical. Every food is measured. Every exercise gauge.

They don't associate with anybody that's going to take them away from that. Night on the towns? Oh no, sir. In bed by eight, up at five, it's just regimen, regimen.

They know all about perseverance. Starting a business, parenting. I mean, what parent says, oh, this is not working out.

Little Johnny's not listening. I'm out of here. Go find somebody.

Go out the door locked. Go find somebody else. We know about perseverance in everything but in Christianity.

When it comes to our faith in God, it's like, well, if it's hurting, it's not God. No, God says, no, when it hurts, draw near to me. Think about this.

In our deepest trials is when God does His deepest work. In our deepest trials, that's when God does His deepest work. You think this preaching and this passion just came from sitting on the couch relaxing? It takes broken men to break men.

God had to hit me with the sledgehammer of life and chew me up and spit me out so I come out weak and broken before Him saying, as strong as I thought I was, I'm nothing. Lord, I need You. And He keeps pounding and breaking and humiliating and humbling and humiliating and humbling and humiliating and humbling and humiliating and humbling.

So when I get up here now, I walk like this with a little limp, saying, oh, God, if You don't move, if You don't take over this service, if You don't preach through me, I can't do it. That's what brokenness does. And many people are running away from the flame when they need to run into it with God.

Think about that. In our deepest trials is when God does His deepest work. And I knew this point was going to raise some passion because it did to me all week.

So true. People bail out early. It's getting difficult, yeah.

You should study the names of God. El Shaddai, Jehovah Nisi, Jehovah Sabaoth, my provider, my banner, Rachah, all the names of God, who He is. But see, we don't know Him as those things.

We just know Him, you know, when I go to church. But to truly know Him, it's almost like, you know, D-Day happened, right? The big D-Day event, 70-year anniversary. A soldier, a wounded soldier, legs, he can't walk anymore.

He's left there to die. The sergeant picks him up and carries him to the medic. They get him back to the States.

You think he has a different relationship now with the sergeant? Or a different understanding of what leadership meant? As he's sitting on the shoulders being carried to the medic? He's not just some soldier sitting there with a cigarette, drinking a beer, watching the guys fight. This guy went through hell, and this guy saved him. That's the same thing.

When God takes you through, some of the most spirit-filled men and women I know, because they went through hell and back. It's not because they've never went through anything. It's actually they went through a lot of things.

Divorce, adultery, abortion, brokenness, people rejecting them, on-the-job harassment through the court system. And they're just being broken and broken and broken and broken. Now some of those things we bring upon ourselves.

Obviously. But also God allows some things to say. Because it's hard to break a wild stallion.

You ever see those wild horses? You can't get within 20 feet of them. They have to break them and break their will. And God does that.

Sometimes I tell people, that doesn't sound like a God I want to worship. It sounds like a God I want to worship. Because in my prideful, arrogant state, I was on a detour to destruction.

I'm on a highway to hell. That ACDC song. I used to play it all the time.

I'm on a highway to hell. And I knew it. But then when He brings you off that highway and restructures and breaks you, and in that deepest hurt, times where I just didn't know how I was going to get through life and through that, and then through that deepest struggle comes a deep commitment.

That's sometimes why I worry for young adults. They haven't been through anything. They'll take God as if He's a choice on a menu.

You say, give me about 10 years. Come talk to me in about 10 years, and then you'll see. But you have to rely on Him.

You have to look to Him. See, it's in the struggle you have to look to Him. It's in the difficulty you have to look to Him.

And sometimes we bring the difficulty on us ourselves, don't we? The circumstance or the difficulty that we're going through, sometimes God says, I told you how to get out of that years ago. And you ignored Me. And you ignored Me.

And you ignored Me. And you're going to stay there until you... See, God doesn't negotiate. Right? This military guy we got back for five Taliban? Well, I'm not going to go there.

But God doesn't do that, okay? I've got strong opinions, but I'm not going there. I promise. I've got Democrats, Independents, and Republicans in the office here, in the room.

But the whole point is that God doesn't negotiate. Sometimes it will. If I just hold out long enough, right? If I just hold out long enough, God will change His mind.

I bet that what Israel thought after the first few years in the desert, what did they think after the tenth year? Fifteenth year? Twentieth year? God says, listen, I will not be mocked. Whatever you reap, you will sow. There's no way around that.

Sometimes we'll think, well, we'll come around... He says, whatever you reap, you sow. But the good news is still a loving Father saying, listen, you might have been going in the right direction. You know it.

You're convicted. Would you turn back to Me? I can restore the years that the canker worm and the locusts had consumed out of your land. I can restore all of those years.

Yeah, there's circumstances, there's difficulties, but if you give it back to Me, I can restore all that. If you stay in your still miserable spot of rebellion, guess what? You'll stay in your miserable spot of rebellion. Of course, He's a loving God.

He'll still work in our lives, but I think many people don't experience the fullness of God because they stay in that state of rebellion in certain areas. We know where God said, hey, listen, you need to do this, and we don't do it, right? Because we think God is a negotiator. Well, if I give it a few years, He'll forget.

If I give it a few months, He'll forget. And He says, no, I don't forget. That's why perseverance is so important.

The calm, the calm in your life is just beyond the storm. The rest is just beyond the battle. You might say, well, that sounds like some motivational speaker on TV.

Well, yeah, some of the things those guys say have some good points. That's true. The calm is just beyond the storm.

I've never seen God leave somebody in a storm their entire life. It might feel like it, right? But the calm, just before this, the calm is just beyond the storm. The rest is just beyond the battle.

Some of you are weary. Some of you are tired, but don't give up. Look up.

You needed this encouragement today to just keep persevering. Keep moving forward. God will sustain you.

And it's actually in that broken independence is when we get an extra boost of strength, an extra filling of the Holy Spirit. And how do we persevere, you might say? Well, back to point one. Truth must be reinforced.

Truth must be encouraged. Truth must be nurtured. Right here.

Though He slay me, I will trust Him. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, He will hold me. The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and even though I fall, He's going to hold me up with His right hand.

As the enemy comes in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord raises up a standard again. You think reading all that's going to lead to more negativity? Oh, gosh, God, you're too good. The promises are too strong.

I knew you're in control, but, but, but. You can't stay in this in misery at the same time. So that's how you persevere, is you get back into the thing that God calls us to plant our minds into.

Anytime, you see this, anytime a person is drifting from the truth, ask them about their devotional time in worship. I've never heard, oh, it's going great. Powerful worship, powerful.

No, it draws them away. So the third lesson, and I say this a lot, so I want to clarify, actually, these last two. The third lesson is on humility.

The disciples humbled themselves. The disciples were powerful because they were broken. And you've heard me say before, a famous quote from the Puritans, the same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay.

Did you catch that? The same sun that melts the wax hardens the clay. Humility is a heart of wax. Think about that.

Humility is a heart of wax. It's bendable. It's flexible.

It moves. Truth doesn't, right? But our attitude does. So that's really what humility is, if you want to sum it up.

It's that humble heart that moves. It's bendable. It's flexible.

It's loving. Or is your heart cold and callous and stern and dogmatic and rigid? If it is, and you've been coming here a while, I'm tired of saying this. Would you take it to God tonight? Would you take it to God tonight? You know who you are.

We all know who we are when God deals with our hearts. If you ask a person about you, will they say that they are loving and forgiving and gracious and gentle? Or will they say they're hard and rigid and arrogant and mean? Father's Day is next week. We've got some repenting to do.

Oh, prone to wander. You hear that lyrics? I'm prone to wander. The old hymn says that's how we are.

We're prone to wander. One of the only ways to get us back is humility. Have that heart.

And I've not mastered this area. I'll never stand up here and say I've mastered this area. But I want to die trying.

There's a big difference there. Because some people are so set in their ways they're doing this right now. Well, whatever.

That's who I am. Take it or leave it. My spouse married me.

She got what she got. I'm a hard man. I've got hard things going on.

Who do you think I'm preaching to? You! And me! Come on! This isn't for the next service. This is a 4pm service. So let's do a quick test.

When facing conflict, are the works of the flesh revealed? Because conflict, challenges, criticism, and struggles reveal the heart. See, it's very easy for me to act like a Christian today when I see you guys. Oh, how's it going? Good.

It's very easy. Now what happens if I get home, my wife left the dog inside, the trash is all over the yard, the back door's open, and the toilet's overflowing? You see where this is going, right? That's what reveals the heart. I would love to tell you that every time I go, oh, no problem, let me just, you know.

Sometimes I do when I'm walking in the Spirit. But when you walk in the flesh, it's bad, right? So that's how you test your heart. Don't test your heart right now.

Smile, it's good to see you. Test your heart when the car breaks down. Test your heart when the husband and wife's spouse says something you don't want to hear.

Test your heart when you're going through conflict, challenges, criticism, and struggles. When you see a Christian solid who can stand there humble and go through challenges, you know somebody who's not allowing the flesh to lead. That's how you know humility.

When a vessel is struck, what's inside spills out. So are you a humble person or not? It all depends on when this happens. Look at Galatians 5.19. Here's the acts of the flesh.

We all know about witchcraft and sexual debauchery and sexual immorality, but look at these. We seem to just skip over these. Hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, which is fighting, factions, and envy, quarreling, hostility.

Why do we always remove those? Let's just focus on adultery and homosexuality and sexual assent, Jane. Well, that's one part of it, but keep reading. That's what's in the church too.

You don't think hatred, you don't think discord, and fits of rage. I mean, I've never seen more in the church in my life. Not this church per se, but just Christians in general.

We are a bunch of ununited, complaining, contentious, arguing people. That's why we need the filling of the Spirit. The same flesh that's in me is in you.

The same thing. There is no hope for unity, productivity, and power in a flesh-driven church until repentance takes place. Let me repeat that.

That's why I want to really bring these points home a lot. There is no hope for unity at all. No hope for unity, productivity, and power in a flesh-driven church until repentance takes place and humility is embraced.

And the fourth lesson leads me right into this. The disciples, interesting, even though we can tease these guys, sometimes they wanted this power position, these different things. When Jesus said, one of you is a devil and you're going to betray me, you know what they all said? Lord, is it I? Is it I? Self-examination.

We see Peter after he denied Christ was just broken. We see self-examination. He's very healthy.

So everything I just said, guess where it's leading me to? Right here. The fourth point for those who don't want to hear these things, you need to hear these things. Look at the front of your bulletin.

Many are living with problems of one kind or another. I suspect if we knew the truth, we would discover that it is in numerous cases, the trouble is rooted in rebellion. Now, I'm going to recommend another book.

I know I'm kind of doing that a lot, but we'll catch on to some of you who want to read. This is not for the faint of heart either. Touching godliness.

It's all about submission to authority. And I was very convicted. And it's not just your boss or something, but submitting to people in general.

We have a hard time with that. I didn't realize I have a hard time with that. Whether it's government officials locally or people in general.

You know, it's a power position, right? We always have, you know, it's all about drawing closer to God through what do I always say? The fully surrendered life, right? Well, I want to now, I want to just elaborate on what that means, because he's got a good test in here for the fully surrendered life. Unfortunately, many Christians, even after decades of knowing the Lord, still remain shallow and carnal. Really? Yep.

Don't worry, they're not upset. Their children's ministry workers have to be out by 5.15. I want to make sure, because you're like, this guy's upsetting a lot of people tonight. I usually do that in mixed crowds, but not Christian crowds.

Unfortunately, many Christians, even after decades of knowing the Lord, and I've got to tell you the truth, this is true, and it's sad. There have been Christians longer than me, and I wonder, when are you going to grow up? When are you going to grow up? And it starts with rebellion. This started to click, oh, I've started, everything, a lot of things are rooted in rebellion.

Rebellion. Rebellion against God, against obedience, against His truth, but look what He says here. They have not really touched godliness.

The reason is that they are still in control of their lives, and God cannot mold them, for they are not like clay in the potter's hands. And here's, and this is a convicting checklist. He asks the question, do you have a problem with surrendering your life, or do you have a problem with authority and rebellion? Well, here's a test of that.

Do you lack a sense of purpose and peace in your life? Is it hard for you to know God's will? Do you regularly experience strife and disunity with others? Do you feel lonely and alienated from God and your fellow man? Is it difficult for you to believe and obey the commands of God? Are you rude and unkind? Do you have careless and hurtful conversations? If you're going, oh, wow, he's got my number. No, God's got your number. It's called rebellion.

And rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, in God's eyes. Do you lack humility and a gentle spirit? If you don't know if you have a gentle spirit, just ask your spouse. Okay? Do you have a gentle spirit? I'm a little scared of my answer, right, so I probably won't ask Morgan.

I'm being a little too transparent, right? Some days I do. I'll tell you right now. Some weeks I have a gentle spirit.

Oh, Lord, thank God. But other weeks, where did that come from? Where did that come from? Because when a vessel is struck, what's inside spills out. We have to be careful.

Do you lack spiritual authority? Here's a key. Do you lack spiritual authority when you share God's word with others? You may say all the right words, but God's power is missing. Are you defensive when questioned about your choices? That's pretty much everybody in this room.

Do you feel hurt and offended when somebody corrects you? Where's he getting this stuff from? Do little things irritate you? Just the little things. Why is it our flesh hates submission and resists learning about it? It's because submission requires brokenness, humbling ourselves, choosing to become the lamb and not the wolf. And I would say that that is at the heart of a lot of my messages is rebellion.

And that's why I'm calling the church and Christians back to that. And this shouldn't be a heavy thing like, man, he just named me. No, God named you.

And to be honest, most people can identify with that checklist. Right? If you can't, guess what? There's no humility. See, some people come to church thinking, oh, they need to hear this.

And this person, this person, yeah, I'm so spiritual. God says, no, I'm talking to you. He's even talking to me through this sermon.

I'm reading this going, wow. Yeah, the little things are bothering me this week. Do you regularly experience strife and disunity with others? No, it's been okay this week.

Are you rude and unkind to your subordinates? No. Do you have a careless and hurtful conversation? Yeah, sometimes. Do you lack humility and a gentle spirit? Yeah, sometimes.

Because rebellion's in our heart. See, rebellion just doesn't go sit on the corner when we become a Christian. The rebellion stays there.

So now I've got this struggle inside of me of rebelling or honoring God, of feeding the flesh or feeding the spirit, of listening or wanting to be heard. It's all rooted in rebellion. And that's the fourth point I wanted to just hit on with this about the disciples.

Honest self-examination. There's nothing wrong with that. That's the whole point of worship.

I actually have the worship team come back out now and go into a time of worship and prayer. The whole point itself of sermons actually is self-examination. Woe be to the man who is in a hurry to get out of here, right? Go eat and just scurry through worship.

The whole point is self-examination. Lord, in light of your word, where do I line up? Some sermons are in light of your word, we're going to bless you, we're going to thank you, you're going to build me up. But other sermons, Lord, in light of what's been said, where do I need work? And when you admit that, Lord, I need work in this area, and maybe some tears flow, some apologies are said, then you grow spiritually.

And then something else happens, and you grow spiritually. And you repent, and you say, Lord, I need to watch my tongue, I'm immature in this area. And then you grow spiritually.

And then see, it's a... So that's why somebody who's been a Christian 20 years longer than you is still immature. Why? Because they're not getting out of that rebellion, that consistent rebellious spirit. Get out

of that Jezebel rebellious spirit.

And bring repentance. So change can take place, even in men and women. Everybody in this room, this message is to our hearts.

Because pride can take us captive and think, well, I don't need to hear that. But God says, listen, learn from the disciples on a self-examination. Just remember this, rebellion, rebellion at it's core is demonic.

Rebellion is the character of Satan, it's not the character of God. So when I'm wanting to respond negatively to an email, or get the last word in, or you're correcting me and I don't like it, that's rebellion, it's not right. But the flip side is true also, right? It's amazing, I'm seeing, even in this church, I'll just be honest with you, sometimes we have to go to people, we talk to them, and you know, I'm amazed, it's not what they did really, I mean, I do things wrong sometimes, I'm rude, I didn't see, you know, it's really not what they did, but how they respond to us challenging them is disheartening.

What you did is no big deal. We're just saying, next time you might, but how you're acting, where did that come from? So it's usually not what a person does, it's the attitude behind their defensive attitude. They get critical, they get mad, and then we don't see them for a month.

I'm like, jeez, I just want you to straighten up your papers next time. That's not an example, I've never done that before. But it's the little things, you know? People say, Shane, can you make this announcement? So I get critiqued too, I'm just saying, but it's how you handle that.

And I just saw this a lot. It saddens me, because we'll go and we'll talk to somebody, we'll say, listen, here's an area we'd like to just have you work on, and then they get upset. And they make a little tiny molehill into a big, large mountain, and now we have problems.

Why? Rebellion. It's all in us, and God calls us to crucify Him.

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/LLH1cw56YZc.mp4>

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