

The 21st Century Disciple of Christ

by Steve Gallagher

This sermon focuses on the characteristics of a true disciple of Jesus Christ as outlined in Matthew 10. It emphasizes the importance of emulating Jesus, confessing Him openly before others, and being prepared to face opposition and persecution from the world. The message highlights the need for genuine repentance, transformation, and a deep relationship with Jesus to qualify as a disciple. It encourages individuals to trust in God's redemption and believe that their best days are ahead, regardless of past failures or setbacks.

Scripture: Matthew 10:24, Matthew 10:32, Matthew 10:22, Matthew 10:37, Luke 10:1, Revelation 17:6, 2 Timothy 1:7, Mark 8:38, John 13:35

Topics: "Discipleship", "Faith in Adversity"

Description

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Transcript

Good morning. So the Lord gave me a title for this message out of Matthew 10 today, 21st Century Disciple of Christ. That's what we're going to be talking about.

Now the primary focus here is the 12 disciples first. That's who he's speaking to first, you know, that was his initial thoughts. And you see that especially in the first 15 verses, which are mostly aimed towards those 12 men, but you will see that it extends beyond that.

And by the end of this chapter, you can't get away from the fact that he is speaking to every single disciple of Jesus Christ who will ever live. I mean, he, you see it in verse 23, he goes all the way to the second coming. And in fact, the, all of that discourse provided in Mark 13 and Luke 21 has the same exact teaching in here about persecution and so on.

I mean, there is a real tie in here to end time believers, especially, which just happens to be you and me, right? So Jesus has something he wants to say to you men here today, I believe. I believe that. And I want to break this down into three basic characteristics of a true disciple of Jesus Christ here today.

That's the simplest way to do it. And the first is that every genuine disciple will emulate Jesus. I mean, that's where it begins.

Every true disciple will emulate Jesus. Look at verses 24 and 25. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master.

It is enough for the disciple to, that he become like his teacher, and the slave like his master. And Luke gives the same thing, but just a slightly little difference. He says, quoting Jesus, of course, in a different setting, a disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher.

And that is a picture of the path that the Lord has his people on, becoming increasingly more like Christ. And if you are not increasingly becoming more like Christ, then you need to really question yourself and take a hard look at your life and what's going on with it. Because every true disciple is going to emulate his master.

And that's the real message here. Jesus is saying, you need to be like me. You need to live your life as I lived my life.

You need to handle even hatred like I handled it. So the main focus here is the master-disciple relationship. And, you know, this word disciple, this isn't just like a biblical term for the same thing we would call student.

They're not the same. They're not equal synonyms or whatever. The idea of student is really a Western way of seeing things, you know, and that is why in the Western church you have so much, so many people with a great deal of head knowledge about the Christian faith, but very little reality in the way they live their daily lives.

Because we like to learn information. That's easy. But to live it out, to practice or put into practice what you are learning in your daily life, that's a whole other matter.

That's for a disciple, not a student. Now, the disciple does learn, right? He does learn from his master, but he puts it into practice. He's not like the guy who goes to church on Sunday and hears a nice teaching and goes in one ear and out the other, and he can't wait to get back to his selfish American lifestyle.

Originally, our Bible schools and seminaries in this nation began like this, with this mindset of sitting at the feet of Jesus and learning of him, coming to know him, knowing what his presence is like, knowing how to hear his voice, knowing what he is saying to me, what his will is for my life. That was the original concept behind Bible schools and seminaries when they began. But as prone to man, what typically so often begins with a sincere desire to do the right thing, eventually flesh gets in, pride gets in, and before you know it, they became businesses, basically.

And when a Bible school becomes a business and the president or whoever runs it, that's his main thing. Then he starts thinking in terms of, I've got to make sure that we get enough students in here, and we've got to make sure that we have enough tuition so we can cover all these things. And instead of going and finding the godliest, most humble men of God to teach and train and build into these young people, what they do is they look for scholars with the most letters behind their names, whether or not they even know the Lord.

They want men who can tell us Greek sentence structure and give us biblical facts, who may not know anything about walking with Jesus Christ. And it's a big reason why the church is in the condition it's in now, because so many pastors have been taught and have learned to emulate successful preachers, not necessarily godly preachers, and so on. But we need to understand that every follower of Christ is a disciple of Christ.

John the apostle said, if we say we abide in him, then we ought to walk as he walked, right? We ought to walk as he walked. To be like Christ is to act like Christ. And that's the basic idea of that corny movie we play in here about once a year, In His Steps.

Have you guys seen it yet? Oh, it's coming. It'll be great for your flesh, I promise you. Black and white, lousy acting, but what a message.

You know, the message in there is, who knows, nobody. What am I going to do with you guys? Have you ever heard of the saying, what would Jesus do? That's where it came from, that corny 60s movie. What would Jesus do? And that's what it means to emulate Christ.

Jesus said, as Pastor Ed's already shared, heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out demons, freely receive, freely give. Jesus was a mercy doer. That is what his life was all about, and it was foretold back in the book of Isaiah 600, 700 years before this.

That the coming Messiah would be all about trying to meet the needs of the poor and the downtrodden, and that is exactly what Jesus did. Now, we're probably not going to be used by the Lord to raise the dead and cleanse the lepers, but if you are a true disciple of Jesus Christ, you are certainly going to have compassion for people in need. There's going to be something inside you that is drawn to that need and desires to meet that need, whatever it may be.

Each one of you, the Lord's going to have a special call on your life. You have been so out of it because of your sin. You have not been able to hear from the voice of the Lord, but you will.

As that sin starts going away out of your life, that addiction starts falling away, you're going to have an open avenue to the Lord, and he's going to be speaking to you and showing you what he has for your life. Such an awesome thing. Each of you has a special set of abilities and giftings and things that are conducive to your personality, your temperament, and the Lord knows exactly where to put you, when to put you there, how to put you there, and how to use you there, and I promise you he will do that.

I promise you. By this, all men will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. That's the proof right there.

If you have love, if there is something inside you that is compelling you to get out of yourself and to see the needs of others and to try to help other people. Something bigger than you. Something bigger than you.

Man, man, what God could do with you. What God could do with you. Now you guys know I'm no flattering preacher, right? We understand that about Pastor Steve.

I'm not here to flatter you. I'm telling you facts. I'm giving you the facts that if you respond to the Lord, you will be amazed what's going to come out of your life before it's over with.

All right, number two. Every genuine disciple will confess Jesus Christ, and you see it in verse 32, and let me just take a minute to go through this, these couple of sentences here. It begins with the word therefore, and that means basically everything before this, 31 verses leading up to this statement right here that we're about to hear.

All of this, therefore, therefore. And then he says therefore everyone or whoever. That encompasses, right, down through the ages, anyone who would read this or hear this.

Everyone, whoever confesses me. Now we like to stop there because that's nice and safe. You know, if I can just, in my closet, Jesus I confess you, you're my Savior and you're the Lord and yeah, that's, anybody can do that, right? But Jesus is saying something different here, isn't he? Everyone who confesses me, where? Before men, right? Before men.

This is a call to confess him, to acknowledge him, to declare him before other people. It means that you openly acknowledge that you belong to him, that you believe in him, that you follow him. You identify yourself with him.

And this isn't limited to pulpit, the pulpit, okay? In fact, that's not even the context. There was no pulpit back then. These 12 men weren't going out carrying some pulpit behind them, right? They were going into the highway, excuse me, they were going into the highways, byways, town squares, whatever, to share the Lord with people, you know, just individuals in different kinds of settings.

This is really referring to the daily life. It's talking about a willingness to share the Lord with other people as the Lord gives you opportunities. And he definitely will do that.

And it's not meant just for bold personalities, okay? There are some men who are, you know, geared this way more readily, like we saw Frank Leonetti here a few weeks ago, or Luke might be this kind of guy, or Josh Rowan, you know, those kind of guys that are just beaming, brimming with personal confidence and everything. I'm not like that. I'm not beaming and I'm not brimming.

In fact, I'm actually pretty shy. And I've said it many times down through the years, it's actually easier for me to preach to a thousand people than to have a one-on-one conversation with someone I don't know. It's like I'm just totally awkward and don't know what to say and all that kind of stuff.

But it doesn't matter because many times the Lord has put something in my heart to share with someone, and I just know it's the Lord, and I just get out of myself. I open my mouth and the words just flow, and it talks about it in there. You don't have to worry about what to say.

I will put the words in your mouth. What an awesome thing that is, man! I'm telling you it's an awesome thing to open your mouth, especially when you're fearful and the Lord shows up and he just takes over. But you know, when you're all closed up in self and all about protecting yourself and living behind your safe little walls, you will never know the joy of leading another person to the Lord.

Man, that's some good preaching. Therefore, everyone who confesses me before men, I will also confess him before my Father who is in heaven. But whosoever shall deny me before men, in other words, just won't confess him, him will I also deny before my Father who's in heaven.

So Jesus goes right from there and launches out 2,000 years later to judgment day, and suddenly that's the new scenario. How did you live during your life? Were you proclaiming him, confessing him,

acknowledging him, or were you denying him? Now in Mark 8, Mark quoted him saying things a little differently, but it's like a parallel to this. He said, for whoever is ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will also be ashamed of him when he comes in his glory of his Father with the holy angels.

You know, isn't that the deal? We're ashamed? Ashamed of the Lord, you know, and I know a lot of it is because of all the disrepute upon the church and so on. Sometimes I feel that way because I don't have any problem connecting to the Lord, you know, and I'll tell anyone that I belong to Jesus Christ. But, you know, when I think about the church, well, I feel like distancing myself because the church is not what it should be.

It's not what it should be. Paul told Timothy, for God has not given us a spirit of timidity. Now that word timidity there is actually really, it's cowardice.

You see it in Revelation 21. It's actually translated as cowardice. And yeah, he's saying God is not creating cowards.

Cowardice comes from selfishness. I'm telling you the truth, man, and this is one of the things about sexual sin. It or any kind of habitual sin will turn you into a coward.

It makes cowards of men because it strips you of your dignity as a man that God created you with. It strips that all away, your self-confidence and all of that. It turns you into a coward that just goes through life always trying to protect yourself.

God does not make men like that. For God has not given us a spirit of timidity or cowardice, but of power. Now look at this, power and love and discipline or a sound mind, some translations say.

It's the same thing. Power to love people, even the unlovable. Power to love people.

Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord. Same word, do not be ashamed. Now over the last few years, there have been a number of big names in the church who have basically denied the Lord.

They've turned their back on Christianity and publicly stated it. That is just unbelievable that they would publicly distance themselves from not just the church, but from the Lord. And you know why? Because they're more concerned about what this culture thinks about them than what the Lord thinks about them.

John MacArthur says, this is a message that says, look at yourself in your life. Are you confessing or are you denying? For your eternal destiny depends on that. You know, he's right.

That's what Jesus said. And don't let some flattering preacher whitewash it. It is what he said it is.

For your, where are we? Are you willing to stand up and confess Jesus Christ? If you will, he will confess you before the father who's in heaven. That means he will say to God on the day of judgment, this one belongs to me. He will affirm his loyalty to you as you have affirmed your loyalty to him.

Now, look, we all have our lapses. Okay. You know, you get in a situation and for whatever reason, I just don't have it in me, Lord, to share with this person, whatever.

We all have our lapses. I mean, Peter denied the Lord, didn't he? But the difference between a true believer and a false, or a true disciple and a false disciple, let's say, is a true believer will have his lapses,

but he will go out and weep bitterly. There will be a tremendous amount of remorse inside of him when he fails the Lord, but a false disciple just doesn't even skip a beat, just goes on.

It's a pattern of life for him because he's all about himself and he's all about protecting himself. So what exactly is Jesus saying about confessing him? I mean, you know, what does that mean exactly? And if you look at Mark's version of this section of scripture, he talks about, you know, Jesus is telling them to go out and preach repentance. That is the core of the gospel, is repentance, because it's at repentance that you turn your life over to the Lord.

That's when you walk away from self-will and you come into God's will. It's when you surrender your life to the Lord and put him in charge of your life. That's what repentance is all about.

But I just want to tell you from a guy who's been preaching repentance for 30-some years, repentance doesn't always go over so good with people, you know. In fact, in verse 14, he talks about how many people will reject that message. And I've been rejected many times for bringing a message of repentance.

But whatever with that, I don't care about that. I'm just saying that it's a hard sell, especially in our day. You know, the bottom line is people will not tolerate that message because it infers that there's something wrong with them.

That's the implication of it, right? That's what's implied. If you say you need to repent, that means that something's wrong in your life, and people will not tolerate that. They're unwilling to humble themselves and acknowledge the sin in their life and in their heart.

And you know, people who won't acknowledge it are not going to repent, and they're not going to change. And so they stay the same forever. The difference between our situation and for what those 12 men faced then is that America has been saturated with the gospel.

I mean, practically every American believes that he's a Christian and believes he's going to heaven. And so it's a difficult message to sell, really, repentance is. But there's a way to do it that I have found works, and it's by using your testimony.

Just like you heard Thursday night, this brother here, I forgot your name. What's your name? Justin, right. Justin, that was a good testimony the other night.

God bless you and the other two guys. This is what I was. I started repenting, and God transformed me, and he's doing a tremendous work inside me.

That's the message I heard three times Thursday night, right? Did you hear that? Those were all three good testimonies. Good in the sense that I felt like all three of those guys got it, and the Lord's doing a work inside them. So if you're able to share with people, you know, you don't necessarily, instead of telling them you need to repent, you say, this is what I was, but the Lord started teaching me how to repent and my need for repenting.

When you make yourself vulnerable like that, you open yourself up, I'm telling you the walls come down. I gave my testimony to open up that series on YouTube, 20 Truths that, I never can remember what's the title of it, 20 Truths that Helped Me With My Battle with Porn Addiction, right? And I opened it up with my testimony, and I mean, I went bare bones, laid it all out, as bad as it was. Actually, I've done that mostly all these years, but I mean, I really laid it out.

And the other night, I was just kind of bored, and I just happened onto that video, and I just started looking down at the comments. You would not believe how many people were just thanking me. You could tell some of them practically with tears in their eyes.

Thank you for opening yourself up like that. Thank you for sharing me, sharing the truth, you know, because they're so used to preachers putting on this facade of something and never making themselves vulnerable and open about what they've been like or anything. And people were just, I mean, really kind of like gushing in their gratitude to me because I was willing to come clean, you know, with what a rat I was.

I don't have the strong enough words to say what I was like, how selfish and prideful and ugly and nasty I was. I was all those things, but the Lord changed me, and that's the message that you guys are all going to have, is I was this horrid thing, but look at what God is doing inside me. Who gets the glory with that? The Lord gets it.

I didn't get any glory out of it. It's the Lord that got the glory out of that testimony, and that kind of a testimony shows people the pathway into the Lord. That's why it's so important, and you do it, and you don't have to point the finger at them.

You need to repent. I'm not aiming at you, Gabe, exactly. Although, if the shoe fits, you know.

You see it here in verse 18. Jesus says, you'll be brought before governors and kings for my sake as a testimony to them, just like you see with Paul. I was this dirty Pharisee rat that full of self-righteousness, and I was even going to persecute these Christians to death.

That's how godly I was, but the Lord came to me and turned me around. You know, that was what he shared. All his preaching, I think, was based on his testimony.

Don't ever be ashamed of what the Lord has done inside you men, and be on the side of bearing your soul to people, and watch how the Lord will use you. I promise you it's true, and of course, in Revelation, you know, talking about the persecution during the time of Antichrist. How do we overcome? Who knows it right off? There you have it.

Okay, well, it's nice to know it, but you got to do it, right? All right, number three. Every genuine disciple will face the world's malice. A few days ago, we had the 2022 midterm elections, and conservatives were predicting all year long that this was going to be a great red wave sweep across our country.

And, you know, just so you know, not that I'm totally conservative, okay, but they do stand for most of the things I would believe in. But anyway, they predicted that, and instead, it turned into the great red washout, I think they're calling it now. It didn't go the way they thought, and there's a lot of reasons for that, I could say, but I'm not going to get into that.

This is what I'm going to say. Our nation has spoken, and what we have told the world is we want abortion. That's what the American people said to the world this last week, Tuesday.

We want abortion. We want homosexual marriage. We want the woke agenda and Antifa.

We want to favor the rights of criminals over honest citizens. We want our children to be taught transgenderism. In short, we want to continue down this path of pushing the envelope into every form of indecency and wickedness.

All that remains now is to shut the mouth of those who oppose this nation going in that direction. Is it true or not? Just like Jesus, they will hate us because we testify that their deeds are evil, and I'll tell you what, you can expect it. I'm predicting it, that the leftists are going to be more emboldened than ever to attack anyone who stands against what they believe and teach.

Look what Jesus said in verse 16. I'm going to read it in the Amplify because it brings it out just a little bit more. Behold, I'm sending you out like sheep in the midst of wolves.

Be wary and wise as serpents, and be innocent, in other words, harmless, guileless, and without falsity as doves. All right, what could be more opposite than a serpent and a dove, right? The one represents the evil one. The other one is a symbol of the Holy Spirit.

And well, the NAS says be shrewd as a serpent, but this says be wary and wise, which is, yeah, that's good. There's nothing wrong with that. Basically, it's saying you need to be discerning of people and what people are in, especially when you're in a hostile situation.

But at the same time, you need to be innocent. You need to be sincerely, confess Jesus Christ without guile or pretense. You know, you just share the Lord openly in a reality way.

So who are these wolves? Paul tells us, for our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, etc., all these evil forces. And that is certainly true, but it is through humans who are being affected by evil spirits that are going to be the ones coming at us. And in the very next verse, he says, beware of men, which literally means be wary of men.

You know, you can't confront a God-hating world without a reaction. You're going to get a reaction, but you get to the place where, what is more important to me, to go through life and make sure I never get hurt in any way? That's not the way of the disciple, I can just tell you that. Well, anyway, Jesus gives us three different categories of people, human beings, who will look to hurt us.

So the day might come when you will be hated by religious people, Jesus says. And he talks about being scourged in their synagogues. Can you imagine that? Getting, you know, your clothes stripped down, hung over a bench or something, and a leather throng, and beaten 39 times with that.

And we're worried about a little bit of criticism. William Barclay said, it's often been true that the man with a message from God has to undergo the hatred and enmity, he doesn't say of the world, he says of a fossilized orthodoxy. And that is the truth.

And, you know, I said it somewhere one time in a message a few years ago, religious people, it's religious people that are going to be the ones who really come after true believers in the days ahead. It was organized religion that put Jesus on the cross. It was organized religion that threatened to rip the early church apart.

It was organized religion that persecuted Wycliffe, Luther, Tyndale, the Moravians, and many others. It was organized religion that opposed every revival the church has ever had. And it will be organized religion that will one day hunt us down and martyr us in the name of God, whatever.

In fact, you see it in Revelation 17, where the mother of harlots, that's just a way of saying the mother of all false religions that have ever been on this earth. The spirit of Babylon is the mother. She's the one who has birthed Hinduism and Buddhism and Islam and nominal Christianity and all the cults and all that stuff.

It's the spirit of Babylon, and it says she's drunk with the blood of the saints. You know, it could very well be that some of you in here will one day be martyred for the Lord. Me too.

Could be. I mean, I'm 68, so the Lord better hurry up and get things going if he wants me to go out like that. Satan disguises himself as what? An angel of light, right? And so it should be no surprise that his ministers would be angels of light and look like that.

And religion has masked itself in this proper form that all looks nice. Yeah. But behind it is a persecutor, one that hates real truth, because religion is just a way to hide behind, you know, some facade.

I'll just leave that right there. And the day might come when you will be hated by governing authorities. You know, we're not there here in this country.

Plenty of other countries are there already, but not here yet. However, we're already seeing over the last few months the FBI tracking down pro-life people and basically busting in their houses with guns drawn. And I predict that if these leftists remain in power, that the day is coming that you, to even speak something negative about homosexuality, will land you in jail.

In fact, it is that way in some countries in Europe already. And the day is going to come that the Antichrist is going to be in control of a one world government that will be persecuting Christians to the death. But this is the one that's really kind of amazing, kind of.

The day might come when you will be hated by your own family members. Look at verse 21. Brother will betray brother to death, and a father, his child, and children will rise up against parents and cause them to be put to death.

Man, that is just amazing. And it is going on and has for many years in the Hindu culture and Muslim lands and so on. But that is going to happen in this country before it's over with.

For sure. Children against parents, parents against children, brothers against sisters, whatever. All the kinds of family relationships you can imagine.

And it's, you know, Jesus said, I did not come to bring peace, but to bring a sword. And what did he mean by that? Not for us to hate people or fight people, but just by bringing the truth, they would hate us. And look at verses 37 to 39.

He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. And he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he who does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

He who has found his life will lose it. And he who has lost his life for my sake will find it. You know, and this is touching on the very thing that you brought you guys here.

Idolatry, right? You know, people have all kinds of different idols. For some, like what Jesus is referring to here, it is familial relationships. For us, it's been sexual pleasure.

Well, at least that's just one idol. Probably you guys had a number of them. I did.

A number of things that were more important, I mean, were just like really big in my life. And the Lord was way down the list. And I would just say this, and this has been my way of handling this over the years.

Anything that seems important to me, I run the opposite direction. I have to do that. I have to push back on that to the extent of running the opposite way, because I can't trust myself.

I just can't. You know, my heart is desperately wicked and deceitful above all things, and it wants what it wants. And so if I am really drawn to something in a strong way, then I just have to go the other way, at least until I know without a doubt that I'm in the right spirit.

It's just all part of paying the price of Christianity. Grant Osborne, he died like a year or two ago, and he was one of the few biblical scholars that I could really say without a doubt, this was a godly man. I love reading his commentaries and stuff.

Here's what he said about all this. Here we are at the heart of discipleship, counting the cost and placing Christ above everything in our lives. In one sense, the family disowns the believer, and in another sense, the believer sets aside allegiance to the family.

The key term here is worthy. One is worthy or deserving of Jesus only if he is placed ahead of all earthly attachments, even family ties. The use of the word loves points to both affection and loyalty.

Jesus, of course, recognizes the deep love between parents and children, but he demands the deeper commitment. This is the core of discipleship. If Jesus is not first, we do not, quote, deserve to be his disciple.

Wow, that's strong. That's strong. So Jesus is warning us that to be his disciple means that religious people are going to turn on us, governmental authorities are going to turn on us, even our own families are going to turn on us.

And then he says in verse 22, he just kind of sums up, he said, you know what, everyone's going to hate you. I mean, that's the bottom line. You're just going to be hated by everybody.

And he says it again in Matthew 24, in the Olivet Discourse, the whole world's going to hate you. Are you sure you want to be a Christian? You better count the cost because the day of nominal Christianity is going to come to an end because you're going to be hated and you're going to have to pay a price. You know, it's not that they hate us exactly, it's who we represent.

They hate God. All right, I'm going to wrap this up. I have a couple of thoughts in my mind.

One thing I want to share is this. This came to me in the shower this morning. That's a great place to get inspiration, I can tell you.

I think it was when I was washing my hair. All 52 of them there left. If you guys get what the Lord has for you in this place, this is going to be a bold statement.

I hope it doesn't come across pridefully because I'm not putting myself in this at all. It's nothing to do with me, not even pure life. It's between you and the Lord, okay? That's my point.

If you get what he means for you to get while you're in this place, I believe, it's my opinion, that you will be more qualified to share Jesus Christ than at least half the preachers in this nation. And here's why I'm saying this. Because to be qualified to speak to others means that you have come to the foot of the cross and to the feet of Jesus.

Those are the two requirements. The foot of the cross represents humbling yourself, allowing God to deal with you, experiencing true repentance, true transformation of character. There is a lot of preachers that have never been there and have never experienced that.

They're just nice guys that went to Bible school. I thank God that I was never a nice guy. Praise God.

Never had that temptation to worry about that. I know what I'm like. So you've got to go through that experience.

And that's what the Lord's taking you guys through this. Something that carves out the filth and the poison and the garbage that's been in you that led you into a life of sin. Do you want that out of you? Yes, that's why you came here.

And the Lord's doing it. He's cutting it out of you. Praise the Lord.

And then the second half of that is to sit at the feet of Jesus. Exactly what Carol was talking about. Exactly.

That's the better part that she will not lose, Mary. She's, you know, still to this day, she's enjoying the wonderful, marvelous rewards and blessings because she put that first. Sitting at the feet of Jesus, learning of him, really wanting to know him.

I have one other thing I want to say. Well, let me ask you guys, how many of you were in the ministry before you came here? A number of you. Okay.

Here's what I want to say to you guys. And beyond what I just said, or kind of adding on that, you think, or at least you have thought, those days are over. I will never again be able to minister.

But I want to tell you, well, let me just say it this way. Josh Rowland, right? Where is Josh? Anyway, he just preached here two weeks ago, right? Four years ago, he told you he got the letter from his denomination saying, we are done with you. Get out.

We are not interested in you. You will never preach in our denomination again. It was nicely said, but that's what they were saying.

And yet, four years later, he's preaching at a very godly ministry. You know, because it's not about the outward pretty looking, I want to say facade, or at least presentation image. It's about the reality of what's going on in your heart with God.

And that's what the Lord sees. So this is what I want to say to you guys that raised your hand. Your best days are ahead of you.

Your best days are ahead of you, because I suspect back when you were in ministry, what I'm describing was not there in your life. And that's why you ended up in sin. But you've gone through a process, you are in a process right now where the Lord is carving out that poison, and he's putting himself in its place.

And you think he's going to go through all that with you and not use you? I promise you, if you let the Lord continue his work, he is going to use you, and your best days are ahead of you. You know, if Christianity ain't about nothing else, it's about redemption. The Lord loves to redeem lost people, lost souls, turn them around, transform their lives, and use them to glorify himself.

He loves that, and that's what he desires with every one of you guys, whether you've been in ministry or not. He wants to do that. In Luke 10, um, some of this was also shared.

Well, actually, what happened in Luke 10 is a slightly different situation. We'll get to it as we continue through the life of Christ. But in that situation, Jesus is sending out 70 men.

Well, it depends on what version of the Bible. Some say 72, some say 70, which translation you have. But we've got 70 men right here, and the Lord wants to send you out.

He wants to do a work inside you, and prepare you, and use you in the days ahead. Would that be okay with you? Lord, I just thank you for giving us this chapter, and the things you shared in this chapter. This is a chapter of reality.

You lay down exactly what a genuine disciple is like in this chapter. I thank you for doing that, Lord. But not only that, this chapter is laden with hope, even for people like us who have done everything wrong in the past.

There's hope for us, and that you're not done with us. You're going to continue to work inside of us. You're going to continue to transform us into the likeness of Jesus, and you're going to use us one day, Lord.

What an awesome thought that these 70 men can go out of this place and be used by the Lord in a very dark and hostile world. I thank you, Lord, for your redemption, the way you redeemed souls, lives that have been destroyed by sin. You know how to put them back together and use them, just like Josh Rowan.

What a wonderful thing. And so I pray, Lord, that the things that were expressed today, God, that you would use them in people's hearts as they need to be, Lord. Some things don't need to be used, but there are some things probably for everyone in there.

And I pray that you will have your way, that people won't just let them drop out, but that, Lord, you will continue ministering this word in the days ahead to these different ones. God bless all these folks, and especially those who will be traveling as they leave here. Lord, just be with them, and bless them, and give them safe travels.

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