

The Way of Discipleship

by Zac Poonen

The Great Commission involves not just preaching the gospel, but also making disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything Jesus commanded.

Duration: 59:55

Scripture: Luke 14:27

Topics: "Discipleship", "Self Denial"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the foundational truths of discipleship, focusing on the conditions Jesus laid out for being His disciple: prioritizing Him above all, taking up one's cross daily to die to self and worldly desires, and being willing to give up all possessions that possess us. The message calls for a deep commitment to following Jesus, even if it means going against family, worldly desires, and possessions.

Transcript

So in the last few weeks we've been looking at some foundational, fundamental truths. Things that we first preached when we started the church here 39 years ago and which those who come newly and children who've grown up in our midst need to hear now. One of the things that we emphasized right from the beginning was the second side of the Great Commission which was not being emphasized mostly in Christendom.

So I just want to show that to you. After Jesus rose up from the dead, he gave his disciples what is commonly known in Christendom as the Great Commission. That was to go into all the world and do something.

Up till then he had told his disciples only to go to Israel, never to go outside Israel. And that's in Matthew chapter 10 and he gave them certain rules there like don't take any money, don't take a second pair of clothes etc. But when he told them to go into all the world, he even told them to take a sword.

Imagine, not to fight with people but to protect yourself from others. And he said now you need to take some money with you unlike the olden days. So the commission was changed.

In Matthew 10 he told them to go and heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead. Now some people still go back to Matthew 10 because there's a tendency in Christendom to live in the old covenant. Just like Jesus said after tasting the new wine they say the old is better.

This is the end of Luke chapter 5. And I found the vast majority of Christians, the vast majority, I would say 90% don't have a clue that the old covenant has been abolished. Not the old testament, not the 39 books of the bible, that's very much the bible. But the old covenant, the rules and laws God gave and everything connected with the old covenant.

Matthew chapter 10 was there. After Jesus rose from the dead, this is the commission he gave. Mark chapter 16, he said go into all the world, verse 15, and preach the gospel to all creatures.

He who has believed and been baptized shall be saved. So then we see he's talking about bringing people to salvation from the wrath of God and from the penalty of sin. That is the first step of salvation.

Salvation from the power of sin comes later, but from the wrath of God and the penalty of sin because we have sinned, they need to believe and be baptized. Now baptism is not essential for salvation, which becomes clear in the second part of verse 16, but he who does not believe will be condemned. He doesn't say he who does not get baptized.

So there is a difference. You need to read scripture carefully. Then we won't go wrong.

That's another problem with most Christians. 90% of Christians I've met do not read the Bible exactly. And sometimes when I point out that to them, I say, boy, I never saw that.

Yeah, you never saw it because you read the Bible too fast. Read the Bible slowly. And then he did not say go and heal the sick and go and cast out demons.

No, no, no. He said these signs will accompany those who have believed and they will cast out demons. They will speak in tongues, they will pick up serpents, they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them.

They lay hands on the sick and they will recover. And it says they went out and preached everywhere, verse 20, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that followed. Now you need to see a distinction between that and Mark 10 where the Lord told him, you go and heal the sick and you cleanse the lepers and you raise the dead.

But here it says, you go and preach the gospel and bring people to salvation and I will do these signs to confirm your word. And that is so necessary when you go into areas where, remember they were going into areas where there were idol worshippers and people who knew nothing about Jesus. And those things happen even today wherever people go to new areas to preach the gospel to those who don't know the name of Jesus.

Even today the Lord confirms his word with signs following with casting out demons and healing the sick and it happens. Because you can think how in a country like India, you go to some village where nobody has ever heard the name of Jesus, they don't even know who he is. They never heard the Bible, they don't have a Bible in their language.

Maybe the whole village is full of non-Christians who probably worship idols or animists who worship evil spirits and you go and tell them about Jesus Christ. They've never heard of him. You take the Bible, it's just like another book, it's like story books they've read or books of their religion.

Can you imagine how you can bring them to faith in Jesus? Have you ever thought of that? Supposing you went into some, I thought of it because when I left my job, I said, Lord I'm willing to go out to unreached

areas if you call me there. And I thought, how shall I do it? I go to someone who's never heard about Christ and I tell him that 2,000 years ago a baby was born. It's like my telling him a fairy tale.

And then this baby didn't have any earthly father. A woman just gave birth to a child. By the time I say that, that fellow is sure I'm off my head and I'm telling him a fairy tale.

I said, without a father? That's never happened. And then I tell him, oh that was God. And then he has some concept in his mind about thousands of his own gods who were supposed to come in ancient times in human form.

He's heard all those stories. His parents, grandparents have talked about it. Now you talk about one more of those gods who came in human form.

Think of this practically. Many of us don't think about it. We think all of the world is full of people who respect the Bible.

It's not true. The vast majority are not like that. And so then you tell them this man grew up and he did a lot of miracles and then they killed him.

And they begin to think, why did he allow somebody to kill him? And say, that was for your sins. He's absolutely sure I'm off my head now. That for his sins, somebody died 2,000 years ago.

And then I said, three days later he came out from the dead. He's convinced this is a nutcase. Have you ever thought how difficult it is to get people to believe the gospel? But then when you're finished, so you say this Jesus is alive.

Bring your demon possessed people whom all your gods could not cure. And I will show you in the name of Jesus how that person gets delivered. And they come to faith.

Bring your sick people. The Bible says the effective fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much. And if a righteous godly man goes with that message to these places, God will confirm his word.

I have seen it happen. It is for confirming the gospel to people who've never heard about it. That's why you must remember in the Acts of the Apostles, the miracles took place where people were spreading the frontiers of the gospel, going to new places where they'd never heard about Jesus.

Don't apply that to your situation. All who could raise a man from the dead and make lame people walk could not heal Timothy's stomach. Can you believe that? So don't confuse the two. A lot of people don't read the scripture carefully.

That's all I want to say. But that is one side of the great commission. And there are, I praise God for all the missionaries who've gone out into unreached areas, preached the gospel, and seen these signs following them.

They've been bitten by snakes and they've escaped when they've eaten, well, not poisonous food, but very unhygienic food. In so many places, God's protected them. I've experienced that myself.

You know, you travel to places where people are very, very unhygienic and you got to eat what they give you. That's what he means, that things which are deadly and it doesn't hurt them. God protects his people.

It's a wonderful truth. It happens today. The Bible is true.

But there is another side to the great commission. And that is what Jesus said in Matthew chapter 28. And that is what is not being sufficiently emphasized in Christendom.

So that's what we taught right at the beginning when we started our church. We felt that God had called us to emphasize this other side, which was not sufficiently emphasized. It's not that we were against the Mark 16 side of the gospel, of the preaching the gospel.

But to use an illustration, supposing 10 people are carrying a very heavy trunk of a tree, a huge log of wood, and you see nine people holding one end of it and one person holding the other end of it, if you're a sensible person, which side will you go and help? You can pray about it and decide. I don't need to pray about it. I know which side I'll go and help.

This one person is holding up one end. So here are 90% of people doing evangelism, evangelism, go out and reach the gospel, and so much money going out for that, going here, going there. And a lot of it, a very shallow work.

And less than 10% preaching discipleship. So that's what we read in Matthew 28. Jesus said in verse 18, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations. Now this is a little further from telling them to believe. Make disciples is someone who follows, who not only believes, but follows.

A disciple is one who learns and follows, who's always learning and following. Make learners and followers of Jesus Christ. Do you think every person who claims to be a believer is a learner and follower of Jesus Christ? It's not true.

They believe, but they're not learners and followers. And then baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That's exactly what we do.

There is only one place, by the way, in the New Testament, where we are clearly commanded by Jesus, only one place, how we should baptize people. And that is here. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

That's exactly what we do. Now there are groups in Christendom that instead of following the command of Jesus, they look at the example of the apostles and the acts of the apostle and say, well, they baptize in the name of Jesus, so we baptize in the name of Jesus. Well, I'd say whenever there is a doubt in your mind in two parts of scripture, I would prefer to do what Jesus said rather than what somebody else did.

I have no doubt about it in my mind. Actually, there is no conflict. The second thing which I've always taught people is never get a doctrine from the Acts of the Apostles.

It's not a doctrinal book, it's a historical book. Because in the Acts of the Apostles, they sold all their property, all the believers. Do you do that? No.

Everybody spoke in tongues. Did you do that? Paul shaved his head. Did you do that? He circumcised Timothy.

There are a lot of things in the Acts of the Apostles. So many Christians who take doctrines from the Acts of the Apostles are 100% dishonest because they pick what they like and leave out what they don't like. That is dishonesty.

Either take the whole thing or take nothing. I take nothing because it is a historical book. It's not doctrine saying you should do this.

It's telling us the things the apostles did. Some were right, some were wrong, like shaving their head and circumcising Timothy. And some they did in great zeal, like selling all their property and having a common purse.

There's no command of that in the New Testament. I'm just giving you some simple principles of Bible study so that you don't get it wrong. So, we baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And then, after we baptize in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, what do we do next? It's part of the Great Commission. Teach them to do every single thing I commanded. That's why we have church meetings.

Why do we meet every week? To teach people to do every single thing that Jesus commanded. The only church I want to belong to is a church that teaches every single thing that Jesus commanded. Teach them to do it.

Now, there's a difference between teaching them and teaching them to do it. And the way I've illustrated it is teaching them is like explaining how to swim on a blackboard. Move your hands like this, breathe like this, move your legs like this, and you go jump in the river.

They'll all drown. Teach them to do is come and follow me. See how I swim and follow me.

That is teach them to do. So, you need to read carefully. He didn't say teach them.

He said teach them to do. And I'll tell you something. There are very few preachers in the world who teach people to do everything that Jesus commanded.

Do you know some of the things that Jesus commanded? Don't be angry with your brother. Don't be anxious. Don't love money.

Be careful with your words. Every idle word men shall speak, they'll give an account in the day of judgment. Don't judge others.

Whatever you do, pray, give, fast, never tell others about it. Keep it in secret. Do you think all these things are being taught everywhere? Don't divorce.

Look at the number of churches in the world today where pastors are divorced. Do you see how Christendom has completely drifted away? And in the midst of this drifting away, God raises up here and there churches and preachers who say, we're going to proclaim the whole truth of God. Paul told Timothy in the last days, people will come with itching ears and will accumulate preachers who will tell them what they like to hear, not what they need to hear.

And so this is the part of the Great Commission, this side of it, which is not proclaimed enough. It's like the one person at the other end of the log. Actually, it's not nine and one.

I think it's 99 and one. 99% at one end of the log and 1% at the other end of the log. And that's why around the world, God raises up preachers and churches to proclaim this, which is not proclaimed.

You know, if you read the Old Testament, you read that God would suddenly raise up a prophet in Israel. Why was the prophet unpopular? Every prophet was unpopular. Do you know that? You know what Stephen told the priests who were great scholars of the Old Testament in Acts chapter 7? He said, name one prophet whom your fathers did not persecute.

They could not name one. Every single prophet in the Old Testament was persecuted. And every single true prophet in the history of Christianity has been opposed and hounded and called a heretic and a cult leader and every devil and every imaginable name because that's the way the devil tries to prevent people from listening to a message that will change their lives.

So, God is always God's witness. And the prophets always proclaimed what Israel needed to hear, not what they wanted to hear. You get a preacher who tells people what they want to hear.

He's not a prophet. He's a psychologist, entertainer, organizer, not a prophet. A prophet tells people what they need to hear, whether they like it or not, whether they get offended or not, whether his congregation decreases or not.

It's very rare. I mean, I've been around in Christendom for 55 years and I'd say it's very rare to find a preacher who's not bothered whether people leave his church or not. Show me a man who's not bothered one bit whether people get offended and leave his church.

That's the man I'd like to hear. We find Christendom full of people who are always seeking to gather people and increase their numbers. And then you pay the price of compromise.

So, what does this mean? I want to say one more thing, a couple of things more, sorry. At the end of this command, he said, and. Now, whenever you see a word and, you know it's connected to all these things.

I am with you always. Now, have you seen that word hung up in many people's homes? Lo, I'm with you always. It's not a correct verse.

You have to put the full verse. There's a condition. If you go into all the world and make disciples and all the world, maybe you're across the street for you.

You don't have to travel to Afghanistan or something just across the street and make your aim is to make disciples. If you have a home meeting in your house, praise the Lord, but make disciples. Don't just entertain them with Bible studies and get a name for yourself.

Make disciples and baptize them in the name of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. None of all this ecumenical, well, let's accept the believers who baptize children. No, no, no, sorry.

Baptize them in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit and then teach them to do every single thing that I have commanded. Then the Lord says, I'll be with you always. Tell me if that verse means anything else.

How is it so many Christians go around saying the Lord is with me always. He's not. And you experience that in your life and you wonder why the Lord is not with you.

Why the Lord doesn't answer your prayer. Take God's word seriously. Don't just take half a verse.

The blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin. Wrong. If we walk in the light as God is in the light, 1 John 1 7, then and then alone the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin.

Lo, I'm with you always till the end of the world. Wrong. If you go and make disciples and teach people to do everything that Jesus commanded, then he'll be with you always.

Why do we take half a verse? You don't have to be a preacher. You can be a man or a woman. But you have a passion to make disciples.

You meet a Christian who's not a disciple and you want to share with him the wonderful message of following Jesus. Maybe you can't preach it well. You give him a tract.

You give him a book. You give him a CD. You're making disciples.

And you're teaching them to obey everything. You're teaching them to stop gossiping. That's discipleship.

I tell you the Lord will be with you. You'll be amazed to see in those difficult awkward situations somebody's with you. Because the Lord keeps his word.

If you keep your part of the bargain or your part of the agreement, you can be absolutely sure the Lord will keep his. Think if you sign an agreement in a court with somebody. There are certain conditions.

You sign it. He signed it. You know they'll be fulfilled.

You're scared of the court. Think if Jesus signed an agreement with you. You go and make disciples.

Baptize them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I've commanded. That's your part.

Here's my part. I'll be with you always. Sign.

You think he won't do it? You think there'll be a single situation any day of the year, whatever, even if you're in the most uttermost parts of the world, that the Lord will not be with you? He'll be with you. I see so many preachers standing in pulpits and I can see pretty soon the Lord is not with them. Why is he not with them? Tell me honestly.

Every preacher you've heard in your life, do you really believe the Lord was with them? If the Lord was with them, they wouldn't preach such boring sermons. Do you think Jesus ever preached a boring sermon? Why is the Lord not with them? They're not making disciples. They're not teaching people to do everything they're commanded.

They take half a verse and think it'll be with them. I think some of you think like that. The Lord will be with you always.

He will not. You may not be a preacher, but do you have a desire to make disciples? Do you have a desire to teach people to do everything that Jesus commanded? Do you have a desire yourself to do everything that Jesus commanded? Then I assure you the Lord will be with you always. He keeps his part of the bargain.

He will sign that and he keeps that agreement. It's the most wonderful thing to do. Can you imagine anything better than having Jesus with you always wherever you go? Look at all these ministers and presidents and all who have so many security guards and commandos and all around them to protect them.

You have Jesus with you always. I say I've got more security guards around me than any minister in the world. Make it your passion.

Even if you're not a preacher, brother, sister, even a young person. Lord Jesus, I want to be a disciple. I want to find out what that means.

I want to do everything you commanded. And as I practice it, I want to teach other people also to do it. You'll have the wonderful privilege of having Jesus with you 24 hours a day.

When you sleep, he will watch over you. You can go to the most dangerous part of the world if you have to go. He'll be with you.

I can't understand why Christians don't want this life. Why do they live this insecure life full of fear, anxiety, and dread, and all types of anxieties about the future? I don't understand it. Why not take the word of Jesus? Unless you believe he won't keep what he says, he will.

Then the other thing I want to say is, that is, you know, we can put it in brackets. Go into all the world, baptize them, they're in the past only to teach them all to do all that I commanded you. And there are two brackets at each end.

One end I just showed you. I'm with you always. At the first end of the bracket is, verse 18, all authority in heaven and earth has been given to me.

Therefore, go into all the nations. Now that is not the basis on which a lot of missionaries and preachers are going into all the world, or even going into North India, or other parts of India. How are people being sent into the unreached parts of the world? Listen to me.

So many people are dying without Christ, therefore go. That's not what Jesus said. That is a human psychological gimmick.

Or what are you doing sitting here making so much money when there are so many people who haven't heard the gospel? Go. Some guy gets all convicted because the preacher has sent him on a guilt trip. Because he's earning so much money when so many people are dying without Christ.

And they say, I better go. Can you imagine Jesus trying all these psychological tricks? These are all the psychological tricks of 20th century preachers and pastors. Try and find it in the Bible.

Try and find one verse in the Bible which says, oh there's so much need, you better go. How can you live in comfort when there's so many people who are living in such difficulty? You'll never find Jesus speaking that type of rubbish. I'll tell you why.

Because the greatest thing in the world is not to go as a missionary to an unreached part of the world. The greatest thing you can do in your life is to do the will of God. And if God calls you to be a teacher in Bangalore and you go as a missionary to Rajasthan, you are living in disobedience.

You have no right to go where God has not called you. You can't join the army and say, I'd like to go in such and such a place. I'd like to go to Kashmir and fight against Pakistan.

Sorry. They say, you got to go where we tell you to go. Not where your adventurous spirit tells you to go.

This is the reason for the shallowness of so much of missionary work I've seen in India across this land. People have come who have not become disciples themselves. Don't make disciples.

It has spirit of adventure, maybe a spirit of sacrifice. That won't do. It's obedience.

To obey is better than sacrifice. Have you read that verse? 1 Samuel 15 22. The Lord told, Samuel told King Saul, God doesn't want all your sacrifices.

King Saul, he wants your obedience because to obey is better than sacrifice. I'm just telling you some things which a lot of people don't. So on what basis should we go then? All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me, therefore go.

Not because there's a need, not because you're living comfortably, not because you've got plenty of money, not because you've got plenty of knowledge, but because you have submitted to that total authority of Jesus Christ in your life. Have you done that? Then he'll tell you to go. You must believe that all authority in heaven and earth belongs to Jesus Christ.

If you have a doubt about that, don't go. I remember once, many years ago, when I had to go to a little dangerous part of this world to preach the gospel. And naturally, you know, we are human and we wonder, well what's going to happen? And the Lord said to me, all authority in heaven and earth is given to me, go.

And my heart was at rest. I didn't go because I had a spirit of adventure, let me go and then I can come back and testify to people what I did over there. In fact, I didn't tell anybody what I did.

All this telling people is for honor. The Lord tells you to go because you've got all authority. And if you experience some fantastic things, you can come back and speak about it to get honor for yourself.

You're a thief taking the glory that belongs to God. So much of in Christendom, if you have discernment, you'll see through all that. I see through it all, it doesn't impress me.

We are called to glorify God. We're not called to exalt ourselves, but to be very, very careful. All authority in heaven and earth is given to me, therefore go and make disciples.

So when they heard that, they did not have to ask Jesus, Lord, what does it mean to make disciples? Because he had already told them. And that's what I want to show you next. You know, the site of the great commission, Luke chapter 24, which has not been emphasized, is how we started this church.

And this is what we taught in the early days, and we need to repeat it again and again. What does it mean to be a disciple? And if a person is converted and not made into a disciple, there can be a problem all through his life. Very often, evangelists have a great lust, I call it a lust, to get converts.

They want to take photographs, they want to take videos to show people how many people were converted, particularly these Americans who come here to have big crusades and take videos, because they believe they show the videos back home, they'll be able to collect more money for their monthly salary and to support their organizations. They have to show. Supposing they don't show any videos and

don't send any reports, well, they get the money from them.

This is the type of deception going on in Christendom. Do you find Paul going around doing that? No. If you do something for God, keep it secret.

Don't advertise it in order to get money or honor that's touching the glory of God. And that's why the mighty power of God is withdrawn from such people. I've seen it.

So, we see here that Jesus, from Luke 14, 25, saw a huge crowd. Now today, if a preacher sees a huge crowd, he knows it's time to take an offering. But that's not what Jesus thought of when he saw a huge crowd.

He didn't get his disciples to take bags now or buckets nowadays. No, he thought, wow, these people need to hear the truth. What an opportunity, 10,000 people.

God, I can tell them the truth. Never took a collection. Jesus and Paul never took a collection.

And that's why we have never done it in all these 39 years. In any of our 50, 60 churches, never. And we'll never do it until Jesus comes.

We just keep a box so that people can give secretly, cheerfully. It's not that we don't need money. We need a lot of money, particularly for our internet ministry and many other things.

But we don't beg. We don't hint. We don't tell people.

We tell God. We say, Lord, you know what we should do. And you will always provide our need.

But our calling is not to collect money. Our calling is to make disciples. God's job is to give us enough resources.

Not only money, but people who are capable to fulfill that ministry. Whether it's videoing or internet or anything, God provides us with people. And they're happy to do it.

So when he saw a large crowd, he turned and said to them some of the most difficult words that he ever spoke to anyone. He wasn't a diplomat saying, oh, I better not lose this crowd now. He said things almost determined to drive them away.

And if you hear me saying things from this pulpit that sound offensive in your ears and almost to drive people away, go back to Jesus and see what he said. Read it exactly. If a man comes to me, this is the first condition of discipleship.

There are three mentioned here and I'll mention them briefly. And number one, he does not hate his father. He does not hate his mother.

He does not hate his wife. He does not hate his children. And he does not hate his brothers and sisters in the church as well.

And his blood brothers and sisters. And he does not hate his own life. There's no way he can be my disciple.

I want to say that to all of you sitting here. If you imagine that you're a disciple of Jesus Christ, ask yourself, do you hate your father, mother, wife, children, brothers, sisters, and your own life? Seven things, seven people. Then you can be a disciple.

Now, what does that mean? Word hatred mean? You know, Jesus sometimes used strong words like, if your right eye offends you, pull it out. If your right hand offends you, cut it off. What was he saying that we should get a knife and cut off our hand or get some scissors and pluck out our eye? You know, he didn't mean that.

He was speaking about an attitude. When you attempted to lust after a woman, imagine that your right eye is blind, but you can still lust with your left eye. So imagine that your left eye is blind too.

What happens then if you become blind? Blind people can't even see that pretty girl in front of them. That's what Jesus meant. When you're tempted with a pretty woman, imagine that you're blind.

Or in other words, turn your eyes away. Whether it's on the computer or a magazine or anywhere, that's what he meant. When you're tempted to sin with your hands in something sexual, imagine that your arms are amputated.

What do you do then? And in the same way here, what did he mean by hatred? We need to understand. The way I've understood it is this. You cannot hate your father and mother properly unless you have obeyed the old covenant commandment first to honor your father and mother.

Jesus said in Mark chapter 7, these are the words of Jesus. I want to show you both. You know, we must compare scripture with scripture.

It is written, honor your, hate your father and mother. It is also written in the words of Jesus, honor your father and mother. Then we understand the balance.

Mark chapter 7, Jesus was saying in Mark chapter 7 verse 8, you neglect the commandment of God to hold your tradition. Mark chapter 7 verse 9, you are experts at setting aside the commandment of God to keep your tradition. For example, Moses said, now remember this is Jesus teaching, honor your father and your mother.

And see how seriously he said it. If you speak evil of your father and mother, you should be killed. Believe Jesus said that? That was the Old Testament law.

Do you speak evil of your father and mother? I hope not. Under the Old Testament law, you should be killed. Those are the words of Jesus.

Have you read it? I know many people say, I never even noticed that. Exactly. Read the scriptures slowly.

He who speaks evil of father and mother must be put to death. But what do you say? You say, if a man says to his father and mother, yeah, I had some money to help you, but I gave it to God. I put it in the offering box.

Sorry, dad, you got to starve because God's work is more important than you. Whether you live or die, it doesn't matter. But I had to give that money for God's work.

You look really spiritual, right? Jesus condemned it. He says, learn to take care of your aged parents. That's the way you honor them.

Don't say, I made a sacrifice, korban, given to God. Whatever I could have given you. And you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother.

They're sick. They need help. You don't care for that.

You're not a disciple. And you thereby cancel the word of God with your traditions. So remember that.

This is the same Jesus who taught people to care so much for their parents. Who also said, you can't be my disciple unless you hate your father and mother. So we, when we compare scripture with scripture, we try and understand what it means.

We have to honor our father and mother. We must not speak evil of them. If they are in need, we must care for them.

Jesus, look at Jesus' own example and we learn something. When Jesus was at home, and that's a picture of a child at home, as long as you're living at home, you must obey your parents. That's a law of God.

It'll go well with you and you'll live long on the earth. Ephesians 6 verse 1, children, obey your parents because this is the first commandment in the Bible. We promise honor your father and mother, that you may live long on the earth, that it may go well with you.

It has gone well with me. I've honored my parents till the time they died and I have not spoken evil of them. I'm going to testify it's gone well with me.

I've not agreed with them. I've not always, I obeyed them as long as I was at home. When I left home, I was on my own.

I took baptism without consulting my parents. I left my job in the navy without consulting my parents. When we started a church, I didn't consult my parents.

No, I was on my own and I chose my wife. My parents didn't choose it for me. So what does it mean? We honor our parents but we don't let them run our life.

When we become disciples, that's the point and you see the example of Jesus. It says in the last verse of Luke chapter 2, he obeyed Joseph and Mary as long as he was at home. Imagine obeying your mother when you're 30 years old and living at home.

Some of you think you're 16 years old and you don't have to obey dad and mom. Jesus obeyed his father and mother, his earthly mother anyway, Joseph died earlier, till he was 30. Shame on you who think you're more spiritual than Jesus.

But then he left home. His father called him to go out in the ministry. And then in the marriage of Cana, his mother comes and says, because his mother knew Jesus is the type of person who can solve so many problems.

She'd seen that for so many years in his home. You tell Jesus something, he'll do something about it. No miracle but it was very ingenious.

So she comes to Jesus and says, they have no wine and he turns around and says, woman. He'd never called her woman in his life. Mama, there's no mama now.

Woman, what have I got to do with you? He doesn't say that but I'm sure she got the shock of her life because he had left home now. He was not going to let her run his life and he didn't do it gently. You know, some people say do it gently over a period of five, six years.

No, straight away. Sorry, mom. I don't call your mother woman.

I mean, it's we're not Jesus yet. We're not like him fully. Mama, daddy, I'm sorry.

I can't do it. I, the Lord now guides me and I have to follow him. Don't let them tell you what to do.

Because above your father and mother is God. You got to listen to him. But don't imagine that you listen to God so easily.

There's a clear command of scripture like don't bow down to idols and your parents, maybe your parents are non-Christians. They ask you to bow down to idols and say, sorry dad, mom, I respect you, love you, thank you for all that you did for me but I can't bow down to idols. You know, in all other areas we must obey and so what the Lord was saying is when it comes to following me, there may be situations where your loved ones clash with you.

Your father, mother, brothers, sisters, they may weep and say, oh my son, don't go and marry somebody outside our religion or caste. Well, it's all a question of whether you're a disciple or not. You can look at the tears of your mother and the command of Jesus and say, sorry Jesus, the tears of my mother mean more to me.

Okay, I hope it'll go well with you. I don't think it will because you're not a disciple. Don't ever say, Jesus said, Lord I'm with you always.

He is not with you always because you're not interested in being a disciple. So, I'm not saying we should deliberately hurt our parents but if something they say clashes with God's Word, particularly you young people when it comes to marriage, the Bible says you should not be unequally yoked with unbelievers. It's very important to find an equal yoke with people who are of the same mind spiritual.

Don't let so many people, so many are interested in the same language, same culture. That's okay, I'm not against that, good. But above all, the same spiritual level, much more important than I'm preaching what I practiced, preaching what I taught my children to practice when it came to their marriage.

Same spiritual level, everything else secondary. So, in other areas too, if you find God calls you to do something and you're very clear, consult with godly older people and then your parents tell you something else. Love them, respect them, say, Dad and Mom, I'm sorry I've got to obey God.

But then you see Jesus at the end of his life and is hanging on the cross. He forgets his own suffering and cares for his mother. You know, he's got four younger brothers and two sisters.

They could care for his mother but they were not believers. So, he tells his mother's sister's son, John. John and James were his cousins.

So, he tells mother, Mother look at John, he's going to be your son from now on and John, that's your mother. And he sent her to the house of her nephew and not to the home of her four sons and two daughters. See how strongly Jesus believed the disciples were more close to him than his own blood relatives.

I see that at the cross. Now, these are the lessons that changed my life. That the disciples of Jesus, I don't mean everybody who attends CFC because I don't believe everybody who attends CFC is a disciple.

I don't see evidence of it in their life. Many of them seek their own. They like nice messages, they come here.

But disciples, where I find a disciple, my heart is more attached to him than to any of my blood relatives. I'll tell you that because I see that in Jesus. You take the stand that Jesus took, it will go really well with you.

You'll experience true Christianity. Don't let a brother or sister also, don't let your wife lead you astray. Remember, Adam got led astray by his wife.

God told him something, his wife told him something, he listened to his wife. Don't do that. God tells you something and your wife tells you something, you have to say, I'm not going to listen to you.

I have to do what God says. Father, mother, wife, children, don't love your children more than God. I'll tell you this.

This is another thing I've seen in so many believers, even in some of our CFC churches. When it comes to their children, they don't hold the same standards that they hold when it comes to other people. They compromise a little.

Oh, this is my son, my daughter. You're not a disciple. Don't ever say the Lord will be with you always.

He will not. If you want to be a disciple of Jesus, you have to love him more than you love your children, more than you love even the brothers and sisters. Don't let some brother and sister here be such a thick friend of yours that you'll be partial to him and compromise.

I never want to do it because I love Jesus. So everything, so I, you know, I like to think in pictures. It helps me.

So I look at it like this. I look at my love for my father, mother, wife, children, brothers and sisters like the light of the stars. There is a light in the stars.

You look at night, you see all the stars. That's my love for my, that's that I love my father. That's that star there.

I love my mother. I love my wife. I love my children.

I love the brothers and sisters, all these bright stars. But then in the morning, the sun comes up and I don't see a single star. They've all disappeared.

Not disappeared. They're there. Even now the stars are shining, but you can't see them because the light of the sun is so bright.

And so that's the picture I get that my love for Jesus must be so great that it blocks out the other things. I almost become blind to and deaf to what others are saying or thinking. That is how you must love Jesus if you want to be a disciple.

It's not that you don't love your parents or wife and children. Those lights are there, but they are not, you don't allow them to conflict with the light of the sun, the love for Jesus. I hope you understand that.

And the seventh thing is your own life. That's the most difficult part. And I just want to mention a little bit about that because it's connected with the next sentence, which I call the second condition of discipleship.

If you don't carry your, verse 27, Luke 14, 27, if you don't carry your own cross and come after me, you cannot be my disciple. You cannot be my disciple if you don't take up the cross. And remember in those days, if you saw anywhere in Israel, man carrying a cross, you know where he was going.

He was not going on a picnic. He was going to be killed. He was going to die.

He had closed his bank account. He had said goodbye to his friends and he was going to die. He had written his will, finished.

That's what it means to take up the cross. As far as this world is concerned, you have died to the opinions of this world, to the pleasures of this world, to the attractions of this world. Think of a man, think of you were, think of a man you see carrying, I'm not talking about Jesus, think of, let's say, some other man.

The Romans crucified many people. One man carrying the cross, you see him out of the window in Jerusalem or somewhere and you know where he's going. He's never going to come back.

He's just going to be killed. It's the end of his life. He said goodbye to everybody.

He's finished and he's gone. And the Lord says, if you're not willing to do that to your own life and to all your interests, you cannot be my disciple. And I really believe that that is the reason why so many Christians have such a shallow Christian life, up and down and up and down and up and down.

They get all stirred up when they hear a message and they get all dedicated and yielded but then after some time they cool off because they've stopped taking up the cross. They're not willing to die. You know, Paul said in Galatians 6 and verse 14, he said, God forbid that I should ever glory except in the cross.

Galatians 6, 14, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ through which the world has been crucified to me and I have been crucified to the world. That means, like the living Bible says, now I have as little interest in this world and its opinion as a dead man has. I'm not going to fight for the things of the world.

I'm not going to live for the things of the world. Can you imagine a man hanging on a cross concerned what people are saying about him or what plans he's going to make for tomorrow? Yeah, we make our plans but if they don't work out as we expect we're not going to get all discouraged and worried. We need to understand this.

There's a detachment that comes from our relatives and there's a detachment that has to come from the world, from the spirit of the world. It's always trying to get into us. I've taken up the cross.

I have as little interest in this world. I've got an interest now in the things of heaven. Think of these people who migrated to the United States, sold all their property here, closed their bank accounts here and go and settle down in the United States.

They're not bothered what happens to what was once their property here which they've given up now. They're building property there. They're earning money there and if our citizenship was really transferred from earth to heaven, we'd really live with heaven values in view all the time and I tell you those are the people whose Christian life is most satisfying.

The anointing never leaves them. The fire of God burns in them day and night because they have really transferred their citizenship from earth to heaven. Most people are not transferred their citizenship.

They're like people who visit a foreign country for one week and come back. So many Christians are like that. They visit heaven Sunday morning for a couple of hours, Wednesday evening for two hours and then come back.

Their home is not in heaven. Well no wonder they have a very unsatisfying Christian experience. It's the cross and I'll tell you having been to so many denominations, it's the message of the cross that is missing in most of Christendom today.

Not the cross where Jesus died. Everybody likes to hear that but the cross where you're supposed to die with him. I am crucified with Christ.

Galatians 2 20. The self is crucified. They that are Christ have crucified the flesh with its lusts.

Galatians 5 24 and Galatians 6 14. Crucified to the world. Self-crucified, the lusts crucified and the world crucified.

That's the cross. It's all in Galatians 2 20, 5 24 and 6 14. So if that message is missing, you don't have disciples and when we have to repent, we have to repent from this wrong attitudes to Christ where parents, relatives are more important.

You know we think repentance is just turning away from sin. Yes but turning away also from loving people on earth more than Jesus or loving our own life more than Christ or loving the world more than Christ. We'll look at it a little more later but there's one more condition of discipleship and that's in Luke 14 33 where it speaks.

There are three conditions. Luke 14 33 is if you don't give up all your possessions, you cannot be my disciple. Now you need to understand that.

You know what possessions are? The things that possess you. Those are your possessions. Things that you hold on to tight.

I'll use an example. If these are my possessions earthly, I hold it like that. It's possession and I hold it with an open palm.

I have them. I possess them or I have them. We are permitted to have but not to possess.

When God saw that Abraham possessed Isaac, God said kill him. Put him on the altar and Abraham took the knife to kill him and God said no. Take him back.

From that day Abraham never possessed Isaac but he had him in his home. You can have 10 million rupees in your bank account. That's not a sin but don't possess it.

Have it. You can have a house in your name. Don't possess it.

You can have three cars if you like if you need them. Don't possess it. These are the three conditions of discipleship.

We took many weeks in the early days to go through them but that's where we laid a foundation and what I've discovered through the years is that many who have come in later have not understood it or what they heard in the beginning they have forgotten. So there's a great need for repetition. We look at it more not next week but a week after.

Let's bow in prayer. The word of God is never never never meant to condemn us. There is no condemnation in the church.

There's no discouragement in the church. The word of God in the church is always with this invitation from God. My son, my daughter, I love you.

Come up higher from the low level that you're living at right now. If that is the way you heard this morning's message, you've heard it right. If that is not the way you heard it, you heard it wrong.

Come up higher. Heavenly Father, help us to see that when you tell us to put you first and to take up the cross, it's only to break the chains that hinder us from running the race, that tie us down to something that will bring us eternal loss. Break those chains, Lord.

Make us wise. Help us to be your disciples. We pray in Jesus' name.

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