

Everyday Discipleship

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[0:00] live in light of eternity, and we kind of think, well, how does that look in real life? And that's what Jesus shows us here really in the first 10 verses of Luke 17.

So you found your place, you can follow along in your copy of God's Word or follow along on the screen. The Bible says this, Then said he unto his disciples, It is impossible, but the defenses will come. But woe unto him through whom they come.

It were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he was cast into the sea, that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves. If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him.

And if he repent, forgive him. And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, and seven times in a day turn again to thee, saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.

Verse 5, And the apostles said unto the Lord, Increase our faith. And the Lord said, If ye had the faith as a grain of a mustard seed, you might say unto the sycamine tree, Be thou plucked up by the root, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you.

[1:04] But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he has come from the field, Go and sit down to meet? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken, and afterward thou shalt eat and drink?

Doth he think that servant, because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. Verse 10, So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants.

We have done that which was our duty to do. So what Jesus is going to do here is, he's going to talk about what everyday discipleship looks like. I think sometimes we hear that word discipleship, we may think of Bible studies, and classes, and learning doctrine, and those things are important. But here in Luke 17, what Jesus shows us is, the discipleship is just as much about how we treat people on Monday, as it is what we believe and sing about on a Sunday.

Because the Christian life is not lived inside these four walls. The idea is we hear the word of God, and we take it out, and we live it in real time. And real time, I don't know if you found this out in your life, it's hard.

[2:21] Life is hard, isn't it? And we're going to come into problems, we're going to face difficulties. It's impossible that offenses will not come. So how do we deal with that when they do? That's what Jesus is going to show us here this morning.

So let's go to the hymn and ask him to help us here today. Father, thank you for this opportunity to once again open your word. Lord, help us never to tire of it. Lord, help us to come to your word with excitement, not just to hear it, Lord, but to receive it and apply it to our life, Lord.

I pray that if there is somebody here today that does not know you as their Savior, Lord, that you would make that very clear to them. Lord, you would just convict their heart. Lord, you would draw them to yourself.

But Lord, for those that do know you here as their Savior, Lord, I pray that we would take an honest inventory of our life and to make sure that we're living life in a way that points and honors you.

Lord, I pray that you would be with me now. You would empty me of self. You'd cleanse me of sin. Fill me with your spirit that I might be a help to these people here this morning. And we ask it in Christ's name. Amen. Thank you so much for standing. You may be seated.

[3:24] You ever started a new job? Maybe it's your first job. And you're kind of excited about it because now you're going to have your own real life money and you can do some things. So you're excited and you go, get that little bit of nerves and you show up on time.

That's a good thing. You know, show up on time is a key thing. Teenagers, if you get a job, that's going to put you ahead of about 99% of people in the world just showing up on time. And you do that and you think, okay, I'm ready to go.

And then somebody comes and hands you about a 10-inch employee handbook and says, here, read this. Everything you need to know is in there. And thankfully, at some point, somebody's going to come alongside and say, hey, why don't you come here?

I'm going to kind of show you how we do things around here. I don't know about you, but I can read about something. I can hear somebody explain it and try to pretend like I'm understanding.

Oh, yeah. But really for me, what clicks is when I see it play out in real time. Like, oh, that's how it does because sometimes it just is not getting in there. And it's true when learning a new job.

[4:27] Maybe it's true in learning a skill or it's true in sports and in parenting. And it's certainly true in the Christian life. The Bible tells us in Philippians 3, verse 17, Paul said, listen, mark them in your life that you can follow as an example in the Christian life.

And the idea that Paul is saying is that we should all have somebody that we look up to. We should all have somebody that's an example. No matter what stage you are in your life, what stage you are in your Christian walk, there should be somebody that's a little bit further along in the race.

And you say, hey, I want to kind of model my life after them because they're modeling their life after Christ. And so we see that and we can see it kind of play out in real time.

And we need examples. But not only that, the Bible is going to tell us here this morning that we, as believers in Christ, we need to be an example for others to follow. And so Jesus is kind of digging into that truth.

And we see throughout scriptures that by the grace of God, through faith in Christ Jesus, when we call on him for salvation, we're forgiven of our sins. The Bible says that old things are passed away and behold, all things have become new, that we're brand new creatures.

[5:40] I mean, when that happens, it's exciting. And I just want to remind you, you don't have to get over it, by the way. You can still be excited, you know, five, 10, 20, 50 years down the road because you're alive in Christ now.

But I think the reality is, is sooner or later, every believer begins to ask the question, well, now what? Now what do I do? What does following Jesus actually look like?

Jesus calls us constantly to follow him, constantly to be his disciples. How do I live like that? How does my life look like that? How do I make Sunday's sermon real on Monday morning?

Because that's the goal. That's the aim. It's not just, the Christian life's not showing up at church, singing some hymns, opening your Bible, and going to lunch. I like all those things. But that's not what our Christian life should consist of.

But as we've seen throughout the Gospel of Luke, Jesus never leaves us guessing. He has a plan. He has a goal. He has an aim. He gives us practical things that we can place into our life.

[6:47] If you were here last week, we saw there at the end of Luke chapter number 16, and really from verses 19 to 31, we looked at a pretty famous story in the Gospel of Luke of the rich man and Lazarus.

And Jesus showed us the tragedy of a man who lived entirely for himself. His life, his daily life was all about himself. He fared sumptuously.

Every day was a feast. Every day was a holiday. He dressed in the best clothes. He had everything the world had to offer. While ignoring both God and the people right in front of him.

He had an opportunity to be a blessing. He had an opportunity to help others. He had an opportunity to point others to God. But instead of using his resources for others, he used it for himself. And the message there was unmistakable, that eternity should change the way that we live. Because we saw later in the story that the poor man, Lazarus, when he died, he went to heaven. And the rich man was not in hell because he was rich.

[7:48] And Lazarus wasn't in heaven because he was poor. No, it's because the rich man trusted in himself, and Lazarus trusted in God. And eternity revealed that. So Jesus was painting this picture that how we live on this side, and what we live for, is going to determine where our eternity is spent.

And now he turns to his disciples as we come into our text in Luke 17, and he answers the question. If we are living in light of eternity, what should that actually look like?

Because we know eternity is coming. He's kind of made that very, very clear over the last few chapters in Luke's gospel. And as we came and we read this text this morning, these first ten verses, it kind of seems like Jesus is just shotgunning things off.

Like none of these things are really related. I mean, he's talking about offenses and forgiving, and then he's talking about mustard seed and trees, and he's talking about servants. I mean, it kind of seems like, Jesus, what is going on?

But I think that we're going to see here this morning is they really paint a beautiful picture that shows us what everyday discipleship looks like. Because here's the big idea of this text, that following Jesus is revealed not merely in what we believe, but how we live, and how we love one another, and how we forgive one another, and how we trust God, and how we serve every single day.

[9:15] See, these first ten verses, what Jesus is showing us is he's going to show us some characteristics that mark a faithful follower of Jesus. Because his disciples are there, and they say, okay, eternity's coming, Lord, we want to live for you.

What does it look like? And so as Jesus answers that question, he begins to show them. He says, listen, you need to have these marks in your life. And the first characteristic we see of a faithful follower of Jesus is this, is that he guards others from stumbling.

That he guards others from stumbling. We see that in verse number one. The Bible says this, it is impossible that offenses will come. I mean, Jesus begins right off the bat with a very sober warning. Now notice, the last few chapters, Jesus has been talking to the Pharisees. Every time he's speaking, he's saying, listen, you need to get this right. You're way in the wrong. But that's not who Jesus is talking to here in this text.

That he's talking to his disciples. This is for people that already belong to him. That are true followers of Christ. And here's what he's essentially saying. If you're going to follow me, here's something you need to understand.

[10:26] Here's something you need to make sure that you are very well aware of that it's a part of life. Problems. Anybody love problems? Anybody got problems?

We should. I mean, we do. The Bible says this, it's impossible that offenses or problems or really the idea here is stumbling blocks.

It's impossible. It's inevitable that they do not come. And really in the original text, in the original language, the picture here is a trigger on a trap to catch an animal.

The bait, it looked harmless. It looked like not a big deal. Oh man, there's a piece of cheese. I'm going to go after it. It's very attractive. It's very appealing. But the moment an animal reached in that trap, boom, it shut.

And it stumbled them up. And Jesus is kind of teaching that's exactly how temptation works. That we live in a fallen world and sin surrounds us and our flesh is weak.

[11:28] And here's what Satan does. He delights in laying traps for God's people. That's what Jesus is saying. You can't live this life. You can't live in a broken, sinful world and not come into the contact with offenses, with stumbling blocks.

It's inevitable. But then Jesus says something at the end of the verse that really should stop us in our tracks and hopefully would have stopped the disciples in their tracks. Because we understand the first part and we've been on the other end of somebody offending us, somebody being a stumbling block.

But here's what Jesus says, but woe unto him through whom they come. See, the shocking part is not that stumbling blocks exist.

I think the shocking part here is that one of his followers could become a stumbling block. That's what he wanted the disciples to understand. He's saying, listen, you're going to run into this in life, but let me remind you, don't be a stumbling block.

Don't be that person that's going to cause other people to stumble. Jesus gives a very strong warning in verse number two. He says, if you do that, here's what you need to be.

[12:38] No, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck and cast into the sea that he should offend one of these little ones. See, a millstone was not a little pebble that somebody may have found in their pocket.

You know when your kids go to the playground when they're little and you come in, you're about to do the laundry and you just pull out a bunch of rocks in their pocket? They're like, what in the world?

They're special rocks to me. Like, no, they're not. Leave them in the playground. We don't want them in our house. We don't want them in our washer. You hear all that noise in there. No, a millstone was an enormous stone and it was really used for grinding grain. Many of the millstones in this day would have been so large, they would have had to been turned by a donkey. They would have connected it to it and the donkey would have ground the grain up there. And so Jesus paints this very shocking picture.

I mean, I just want to see the disciples' face when Jesus starts teaching. Sometimes he says something, I'm like, you can't say that. I mean, Jesus, you think you should put a millstone around our neck and cast us into the sea?

[13:40] I mean, is Jesus saying that drowning should be the punishment when we offend somebody? No, that's not what he's saying. That's not the idea. But what he is saying is that such a terrible death would actually be preferable as opposed to the judgment coming for someone that knowingly and willingly leads one of his followers into temptation, into sin, into problems.

You say, why is he so serious about that? Because that's how seriously Jesus takes our influence. Because I'm sure you've met somebody and you've invited him to church and they'll say something like this, well, I used to go to church, but so-and-so offended me.

Well, the preacher said this, and if that's how Christians are gonna be, I'm never going to church again. You know why? Because our influence makes a difference sometimes in people's eternity. Then we need to be very, very careful and we need to make sure our life is not a stumbling block because when we hear the word stumbling block, we think, oh, well, Jesus must be talking about false teaching.

False teaching is certainly a stumbling block. I just wanna remind you, be very careful what you listen to. Be very careful what you put your faith in. It should be in this and this alone.

Because there's some people, they get on TV and they call themselves preachers. I don't think I'd call them that. If it doesn't say in the word of God, and that's why I always encourage you, bring your own Bible here.

[14:58] Don't just take my word for it because I'm standing up here. No, we are basing our life on the word of God. And yes, a false doctrine and false teaching, it is a stumbling block and it's prevalent in our world today.

But Jesus' warning, it reaches much further than that. You know how we can be a stumbling block? We can do it by hypocrisy. And I'm sure you heard that too.

Well, I'd go to church, but it's just full of hypocrites. Anybody ever heard that? You know, I tell them, you're right because there's people there. And that's how life is sometimes.

But the idea is we're not trying to be that. You know, we can become a stumbling block through bitterness. Everybody knows we go to church, but they're thinking like, that is the most bitter person I've ever met.

They're mad about everything. I mean, something good could happen to them and they'd be mad about it. We can become a stumbling block through compromise or gossip or pride or just careless words. We can become a stumbling block through an unforgiving spirit.

[15:55] See, what Jesus is kind of showing us here in this text is that anything in our life that makes it harder for somebody else to follow Jesus is a stumbling block. And that his children, that his followers, that his disciples should not be a stumbling block.

That we have to be aware of that. That we need to live a life that is above reproach. I mean, I think parents would understand this idea of being a stumbling block more than anybody.

You ever been there and your kids say something? I mean, it stops you in your tracks. And you say to this to them, where did you hear that? Anybody ever say that to your parents?

And then it just comes to you, their mother. That's where it always comes from. I'm not even going to look over there. I'm just going to turn my back this way. But in all seriousness, children are incredible imitators.

They don't just hear our words. They watch our actions. They notice our attitudes. They observe how we treat other people.

[17:06] They see how we respond when things don't go our way. See, in other words, we see that they learn far more from watching us than they do from listening to us.

And we need to be reminded of that. And what Jesus is showing us here in these first couple verses is that if we're followers for Christ and we're living in light of eternity, if we're trying to do what he's

called us to do, somebody's watching you.

Somebody's taking account. And it might be your children. It might be your grandchildren. It might be a young believer that has just come to faith and really trying to figure out what the Christian life looks like.

Listen, it might be, if you're an older married couple in here, it might be a younger married couple. Listen, that's what God has placed us in a church family that they can look around and say, hey, is that what a marriage is supposed to look like?

Is that how it happens? It might be a coworker that's very curious about Christianity and they know you are a Christian. They know you go to church. It might be that neighbor that's trying to figure out why you go to church so much.

[18:06] You know, because my kids say, dad, why do we go to church all the time? And when they were little, especially. We gotta explain it. But listen, your neighbors know you're going to church. So how do we live outside of that?

See, the thought here is is we can never forget that our lives are teaching something every single day. We're either teaching that we really believe Christ, that we really love him by how we interact with others and how we live our lives.

And what Jesus is saying in these first couple of verses is be careful that your life doesn't become a stumbling block that keeps someone from following me. He said it would be better if a millstone was cast around your neck than you would offend one of these little ones.

And sometimes we look at that and we think he's talking about little kids. And he could be talking about children, but really the idea is young believers. Those that are babes in Christ. Those that are young in the faith that are just trying to get going.

Because sometimes, you know, if you can just get past a certain thing, then you're good to go, so to speak. So many times people are just getting started in their Christian life and suddenly happens and say, well, if that's what it is, I don't want anything to do with it.

[19:10] And they just kind of fall by the wayside. They become shipwrecked. Their faith becomes shipwrecked. See, our lives should remove obstacles to Christ, not create them.

That's what Jesus is teaching here. That's what he wants us to understand. And that's why Paul told the Corinthians there in 1 Corinthians 11, be ye followers of me, even as I am a follower of Christ.

Now that's a pretty bold statement. I mean, it's kind of pretty audacious to say something like that. If I got up this morning and said, hey, everybody, be like me, I'd be like, this guy is full of himself.

But Paul, what he is saying there in that verse is, listen, if you're watching my life, here's what I want you to see, Jesus. I don't want you to see anybody else except Christ. I don't want you to see anybody else except what he has done.

And really, that should be the goal for every one of us. Because if we are truly living in light of eternity, if we know Christ is our Savior, if we know heaven is our home, then we should care deeply about bringing others with us.

[20:13] That's the whole goal of the Christian life, that we are to go ye therefore into all the world and preach the gospel. We're not trying to build our kingdom. We're not trying to have people look at it and say, man, look at that Christian. No, no, we want people to look at it and say, look at Jesus.

I need that in my life. I need that in my marriage. I need that in my parenting. I need to be that kind of coworker. I need to be that kind of friend. But all of us have lived long enough to know that we're going to disappoint other people.

We're going to be misunderstood and we're going to misunderstand others. We're going to hurt people and we're going to be hurt by them. So how does a true disciple respond when that happens?

That's what Jesus shows us in verse 3 and 4. Here's what he tells us. A faithful follower of Christ is one that learns to forgive again and again and again and again.

See, the first couple of verses, he warns us about becoming the reason somebody else stumbles. But now he says when that happens, if somebody offends you, you need to forgive them.

[21:17] Notice he doesn't say in verse number 3, if your brother is perfect, if your sister is perfect, if your wife is perfect, if your husband is perfect. He doesn't say if no one ever hurts you. No, he says this.

Take heed to yourselves if thy brother trespass against thee. See, the idea is Jesus assumes that when we live in this world and we live in this life, we live within a family, we live within a church, that

it's going to include conflict.

Anybody have just a perfect home? No problems? You just smile the whole way to church? I mean, you smile when you get in the door. We all know how that goes. He's like, if you do one more thing, I'm going to just stop this car.

We're not done. You know. We say things like that all the time. Listen, it happens. Why? Especially when it comes to the local church. You know why God reminds us and Jesus gives us this truth? Because the church isn't made of perfect people. Because if it is, don't join it because you're going to mess it up. I mean, I think we have a pretty awesome church. I love this church. But we're not perfect.

[22:18] Your family's not perfect. You know, because we're just sinners saved by grace. We're growing. Because a church and a family, if we know Christ our Savior, it's just forgiven people who are still growing in Christ.

That's what Jesus reminds us of. So if we're still growing, then we're going to come across problems. So how do we handle it? Jesus gives us two commands. Here's what we say.

Hey, if your brother trespass against you, if he offends you, if he sins against you, here's what we do. Number one, rebuke him. You're like, yeah, that's my spiritual gift. Like, I knew it was in there somewhere.

That's not a spiritual gift. You know, God did not bless you with that. Now, that may be what you think it is, but it's not helping other people. I mean, but in all reality, this word rebuke, it kind of makes us a little bit uncomfortable.

We don't like it. Maybe you're like me, you hear the word rebuke, and maybe you picture, you're an angry confrontation. You, you, you, you've been in a situation where maybe a, a boss rebuked you in front of everybody, and it was kind of, you were embarrassed, you were publicly shamed.

[23:28] That's not what Jesus is saying here. That's not the idea behind rebuke. No, here's, here's what Jesus is, is showing us, that biblical rebuke is a loving confrontation.

The idea is, it's caring enough about somebody to tell them the truth because you love them too much just to leave them there. Just to leave that relationship there.

See, the goal is never humiliation. It's always restoration. It's always moving forward. It's always about being better together and moving forward for the cause of Christ. I mean, some people love confrontation.

Some people, they'll fight at a drop of a hat, and they bring their own hat. You work with somebody like that? I mean, there's people like that. I mean, it's just like, they're just ready to go and they drop it, let's go.

But I would imagine the majority of this room probably doesn't like confrontation. It's not something you wake up like, man, I hope I can confront somebody today. No, if you know it's coming, I mean, you may even call in sick.

[24:31] You're like, I don't want to go to work today. I don't want to go to school today. I don't want to face the music. And we avoid confrontation. And sometimes we convince ourselves that silence is love. You know, I know they offended me, but you know what?

I just don't want to make things awkward. You ever been there? But you know what? It is real awkward because they know it and you know it. You're like, oh. It's awkward. You may think to yourself, well, I don't want to hurt their feelings.

I'll just ignore it. I'm sure you found this out like I have. But ignoring sin, ignoring hard times, ignoring offenses doesn't generally heal relationships.

It usually causes them to drift further apart. It usually causes more difficulty as you move forward. And Jesus is teaching us something here. When a brother offends us and we rebuke them, he wants us to see that truth and grace belong together.

Like peanut butter and jelly. They just go together. I love peanut butter and jelly. Anybody else love it? I eat an Incrustable almost every day. I'm pretty sure that's what the manna was when it fell down in the wilderness.

[25:39] It was Uncrustables. Amazing. Write that down. But listen, truth without grace becomes harsh. And grace without truth isn't biblical.

We have to meet there in the middle. Remember what John told us about Jesus in John 1, verse 14? That Jesus came and he was full of grace and truth.

Jesus didn't show up on the scene and say, everybody's doing a great job. I love all of you. Everybody's on their way to heaven. No, he loved them, but he told them the truth, that they had sinned and they needed a Savior.

That's what the Bible teaches us because real biblical love is willing to speak the truth and is just as willing to extend grace. I think sometimes we can find ourselves on one side or the other depending on our disposition in our personality like, man, I just speak the truth.

You need to season it with grace. But on the other side, we can't just be so loving that we just ignore the truth that there's sin and there's problems. We have to deal with it. But before we get excited about rebuking somebody, notice what Jesus says extremely quickly.

[26:46] And if he repent, forgive him. I love how quickly Jesus moves from confrontation to forgiveness. He doesn't let that linger.

He's telling us, he's saying, listen, the goal is not winning the argument. Listen, if you're trying to win the argument, if you're trying to be right, you've already lost.

You're not helping the relationship. And the goal is always to win a brother or to win a sister back. It's to restore fellowship. That's exactly what Jesus did for us.

You know what Jesus did when he came? He confronted our greatest problem, sin. He confronted it with the truth that there's none righteous, there's no not one. That we've all sinned and come short of the glory of God.

But he didn't come and condemn us. No, he came and he saved us. He laid down his life. He showed grace and mercy to us. And Jesus is reminding us here in this text that forgiven people should be forgiving people.

[27:47] That should be a mark. That should be a characteristic of somebody that knows Christ as their Savior. Listen to what Paul told the Ephesians in Ephesians 4.32 and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another.

Say, okay, you know, maybe I can do that. But here's the kicker. Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. See, we see the motivation there.

You say, well, you know what? They don't deserve it. You're right. They don't deserve it. None of us deserve it. We don't forgive people because they deserve it.

We don't forgive people because we think that they should be forgiven. No, if that were the standard, none of us would ever be forgiven. Not with God and not with each other.

Because sometimes what happens was wrong. It was sin. But here's what Jesus is teaching and we see it throughout the New Testament. We forgive because we've already experienced the undeserved grace of God ourselves.

[28:57] That's how we can forgive again and again. Then Jesus really kind of doubles down on it in verse number four. He says, and if he trespass against thee seven times in a day and seven times in a day turn again to thee saying, I repent, thou shalt forgive him.

I'd imagine maybe the disciples there in verse number three they're like, okay, I'm going to work on that. I think I can, I think, you know, by God's grace I think I can do that. All right, let's, okay, next thing Jesus, what else you got for us?

And then he says this. You think, excuse me, Jesus, did you say seven times in a day? So you're telling me if somebody offends me, somebody sins against me, somebody says something mean to me, the exact same thing, seven different times a day I have to keep forgiving them?

Absolutely not. I mean, if you're, if I'm there, I'm thinking, by the third offense, I'm thinking, are you kidding me? You ever, your kids ever do something over and over and over again?

Like, didn't we just talk about this five minutes ago? Didn't we, did you understand what was coming out of my mouth? I mean, surely there's a limit to this. Maybe Peter said, hey, Jesus, after the fourth time, can I punch him in the face and just move on from there?

[30:13] I mean, think about that. If that's where you are, if somebody just constantly is just doing the same thing over and over and over again to you, and Jesus, he says, nope, seven, if he does it seven times, you gotta forgive him seven times.

Listen, Jesus isn't teaching a math lesson here. So, you know, some people may take this literal, well, I'm gonna keep it in a notebook and be like, yep, that's seven times, you're cut off.

No, here's what Jesus is teaching in this verse. He's teaching an attitude. How we should look at it. See, his point isn't, keep forgiving until you reach seven.

No, his point is this, don't keep score at all. That's not your job. That's not what God's called you to do. Let me ask you a question. How many times has the Lord forgiven you for something? Can you count it? I didn't think so. Neither can I. But you know what? He does it over and over and over and over. See, his mercy, the Bible tells us, it's new every morning.

[31:18] That's why you're here this morning. His mercy's new. Great is thy faithfulness. His grace is sufficient every single day. And what he's reminding us here, and the thought is this, is shouldn't those who have experienced and received such mercy and such grace be the people who freely extend it?

No marriage is going to survive without forgiveness. No family is going to survive without forgiveness. No friendship is going to survive without forgiveness.

And certainly no church family is going to survive without forgiveness. Every healthy relationship is built on two people continually extending grace one to another.

Because we're all sinners. We're going to mess up. We're going to offend. Because you know what usually destroys relationships? It's not one huge explosion. It's usually a thousand little offenses that were never dealt with biblically.

And when that happens, bitterness takes root. Resentment begins to grow. Distance develops. And eventually people that got along and loved each other, and no matter what it was, if it's a marriage or it's a church or it's a friendship, they eventually come to a place where they're not even talking to each other anymore.

[32:30] That's what Jesus is dealing with. He's saying, listen, that's not how my disciples live. Because the world is watching. And the world is seeing how we live. And he's saying, here's what you do. Here's how you get past that.

You lovingly confront it. You don't put it under the rug. And you humbly repent when it's brought to you. And when that happens, you've got to forgive. See, that's how the family of God remains healthy.

And Jesus isn't pretending that forgiveness is easy. I'm not up here saying, oh, just forgive. No, it's difficult. The disciples knew it. You know it.

So you think to yourself, preacher, how can I forgive again? And again, I mean, once is enough. I mean, two is kind of pushing it. But this many times? Well, he gives us the answer in verse 5 and 6. Here's how we do it. We trust God completely. We trust God completely. I mean, imagine sitting there as the disciples. This has to be one of the most demanding commands Jesus gives.

[33:31] We can do other things. We're like, okay, I'm on board with that. But just continually forgiving somebody? You know, I'm not sure I can do that, Jesus. Notice the disciples didn't say, hey, okay, we're going to try harder, Jesus.

We're going to do our best. No, here's their response when Jesus said that, Lord, help us. You know what they realized very quickly? We can't do this. They cry out in verse 5, Lord, increase our faith because they're sitting there and it's hearing, it's hitting their ears and they're thinking, yep, I can't, there's no way I can do that.

Really what they're saying, Lord, if we're going to live this way, you're going to have to do it because that's not in me. That's not how I'm built. That's not what I want to do.

And really, that's a healthy place to be. Maybe you're here, sitting here this morning thinking, I don't know, you preacher, you don't know what they did. You don't know how it happened.

You don't know what they said. You don't understand the pain that it caused. And I may not and I probably don't, but I know this, that if we're going to be able to do what Jesus asked us to do, we have to come to the end of ourselves.

[34:41] We have to realize that the Christian life was never designed to be lived in our own strength. Because just these first four verses are impossible for us to do. See, everything he's commanded in this chapter, guarding others from stumbling, forgiving those that hurt us, loving difficult people, it is impossible apart from his grace.

We say, how do we do it? That's what Jesus tells us in verse number six. He gives an illustration. He says, if ye had the faith as a grain of a mustard seed, you might say unto the sycamine tree, be thou plucked up by the root and be thou planted in the sea and it should obey you.

So they cry out, Lord, Lord, increase our faith. We need more faith or we're not going to be able to do this. But instead, Jesus turns around and he teaches them about the nature of faith.

See, the mustard seed was one of the smallest seeds that would have been known to him in this time, especially there in Israel. And really what Jesus is doing in verse number six is he is not emphasizing the amount of faith.

See, they thought, okay, the only way is if we have more faith. No, here's what he's emphasizing, the object of their faith. That's what he wanted them to get a hold of because here's the truth, even small faith placed in a great Savior is powerful.

[36:03] That's the idea. I don't know about you, but that's encouraging to me because if we're honest, most of us have experienced moments where our faith seems very, very small.

We've prayed while we're trembling. We've obeyed while we're still maybe asking questions. We've trusted while we battled through fear and we're thinking, Lord, I just need more faith. No, Jesus is saying this, you need to make sure your faith is placed in the right thing.

Sometimes we think faith is the answer. No, Jesus is the answer. It's the object of our faith and that's why he explains this idea of this sycamine tree.

He said, if you have the faith of a mustard seed, you can say to the sycamine tree, sycamine tree, move. See, the sycamine tree are really a mulberry tree.

They are known for having an extensive root system. Once they are established, it was incredibly difficult to remove. This is a root system that expanded far, far below the surface.

[37:07] And just as Jesus wasn't giving us a math tutorial earlier, he's not giving us a landscaping class either. No, what he's teaching and what he's illustrating to his disciples here is when something appears impossible, God can still do it.

Because remember the context. He's talking about forgiveness. And maybe when some of the disciples heard that, immediately in their mind, they had something they were dealing with and they said, I can't do it. Jesus, you don't know how deeply rooted this hurt is.

That bitterness may be in our life, that resentment is growing as we talked about and those old wounds, here's what happens many times, they become firmly planted in our heart. And maybe you've said this, maybe you've thought this, maybe your life is there right now, you're thinking, I can't get over it.

I'll never, I just can't forgive them. It's never gonna change. I've forgiven them but it's not changing at all. But you know what Jesus is teaching us here?

That faith in God can uproot what seems impossible to us. That's how we can forgive again and again. Because God can do it, Jesus can do it.

[38:18] And let me just ask you before we move on, what feels impossible in your life right now? Maybe it is forgiving somebody. Maybe it is a sinful habit.

Maybe it's trusting God with kind of some uncertainties that you're facing right now in your family and in your job and in your health or whatever it may be. Maybe it's loving somebody who's difficult to love and maybe even asking the question, do I have enough faith to even do this?

No, the right question is, is my faith resting on the one who is able to do it? That's what Jesus shows us here. That's a mark of a true disciple. It's not about the amount of faith we have, it's where we've placed our faith.

Because we found this out in our own lives, I'm sure, Jesus has never failed me. When I trust myself, when I trust my own faith, it crumbles.

But Jesus doesn't. Jesus helps us move forward. So Jesus shows us that true disciples, they guard others from stumbling, they forgive again and again, and they trust God completely.

[39:20] But if we're not careful, we can begin to do these things in our life and we think, man, I'm pretty good. I'm a pretty good Christian. I mean, I'm nailing this Christian life thing. And isn't that just like our hearts?

The very moment God begins producing fruit and God begins working in our life, we want to take credit for it. We're like, man, anybody like to pat yourself on the back? You don't have to raise your hand. We do. I mean, when I do things around the house that's been on my list to do for a long, long time, I still let my wife know, hey, I did the dishes.

Just wanted you to know. And she's like, yeah, that's what you're supposed to do. And that's kind of what's going on in this text right here. That's why Jesus closes with this final lesson in verses 7 through 10.

He reminds us that everything that we discuss, if these characteristics are part of our life, they shouldn't produce pride. Here's what they should produce. Humble servants. Because faithful

followers of Christ, they serve with humility.

Jesus pictures this scene for us. A servant has spent all day in the field working. He's plowing. He's feeding the cattle. He's tired. He's dirty. He's hungry. I mean, he's waiting for the clock to reach 5 o'clock so he can go inside the house and he can eat some food and he's got to think, man, that's what's got to be coming.

[40 : 33] But he gets in the house there in verse number 8 and the master of the house says, hey, what did you get my dinner ready? I'm hungry. And so the servant, he just does what servants do. They keep serving. And Jesus asked this question in verse 9.

Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded? I trow not. He said, no. The servant did exactly what he was expected to do. Now, people read these verses, they get all weirded out.

Jesus isn't promoting harsh treatment of other people. No, what he's doing is he's using a picture that his audience would have understood especially that servants didn't expect applause simply for fulfilling their responsibility.

That's what they were hired for. Many of these would have been hired help in different situations and Jesus is saying, they're just doing what they're supposed to. But then he brings that same truth and he applies it to our life in verse number 10.

So likewise ye, when ye have done all those things, when you're living this life the way that it's designed, which you are commanded, you say, we are unprofitable servants which have done that which is our duty.

[41 : 41] Verse 10 might seem a little confusing when we first read it. Jesus is not saying that his followers are worthless. It's not the idea. He's not saying that our service has no value.

What he's teaching here is humility. See, the word unprofitable, it means that we have not placed God under obligation. He's reminding us of this truth that God owes us nothing.

He really doesn't. Now on the other side of the coin, God gives us so many things. But sometimes we think, well I'm doing all these things so I deserve that. I deserve that raise.

I deserve these things. God, you owe me because I'm doing all these things. I'm being kind and I'm forgiving and I'm doing all these things. I'm trusting in you so you better give me what I want.

We can subtly begin to think in our life that hey, I've served faithfully, I taught a class, I've given, I've sacrificed, I've worked in the nursery. I mean, you'll have a crown in heaven, don't worry about that. I've done my part. We say all of these things as though God owes us something in return.

[42 : 45] But what verse 10 is reminding us is that everything we have comes from Him. Every opportunity we have to serve, it comes from Him.

Every gift that you have in your own life, it came from Him. Every ounce of strength that you have came from Him. Every victory came from Him. We serve because He's done so much for us.

Because He's changed our life. So I just, I want to ask you that question. Why do you do what you do? Why do you serve the Lord? Is it because you genuinely love Christ or is it because maybe you hope somebody notices?

See, would you still teach that class? Would you still visit those people that aren't able maybe to make it to church? Would you still clean and work in the nursery and help somebody in need if nobody ever thanked you?

See, Jesus reminds us that the audience that we've always been serving is not all of us, it's Him. That we're not doing what we do so everyone's like, wow, man, look at that, that's a real Christian.

[43 : 50] No, I mean, I understand that's difficult for us. But here's what Jesus is saying, I never overlook faithfulness. God knows. He'll settle the score one day.

I mean, we think back over the last few weeks, we see that Jesus is teaching us to live for what lasts. He reminds us to live in light of eternity and here He's showing us this is what it looks like. Sometimes we look at that and we think, man, that's super difficult. That's some serious stuff right there. I'm not sure I'm there. Listen, Jesus isn't describing some spectacular Christianity.

You know what He's describing? Faithful Christianity. That's what it looks like. That everyday Christians, we should do these things. That everyday we have the opportunity to help others instead of cause them to stumble.

That everyday we have the opportunity to forgive. Everyday we have the opportunity to trust God and place our faith in Him. Everyday we have the opportunity to serve. And every one of those choices, here's what it does, it makes us become a little more like Christ every single day.

[44 : 59] I'll leave you with this thought. That everyday discipleship isn't about doing extraordinary things for Jesus. No, it's about faithfully following Him in just the ordinary moments of life.

Because all four of these things, you know what you're going to have the opportunity to do? Probably do it tomorrow and the next day and on Wednesday and Thursday and Friday. That's how Sunday touches Monday. This week, guard somebody from stumbling.

Instead of just living your life with no thought, think to yourself, how's that co-worker that's been asking me about church that I've been about, how would they view this if I said this or did that? How would my kids respond when they see me do that?

Maybe there's somebody you need to forgive this week. Call them up on the phone. Maybe there's a situation right now that you're thinking, Lord, I need more faith. No, you just need to trust God about it.

Keep serving without looking for recognition. That's what everyday discipleship looks like. Would you stand with your heads bowed and with your eyes closed? Thank you.