

Gospel Worthy Life Loss

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- [0 : 0 0] All right, this morning I'm going to talk about gospel-worthy life loss. Gospel-worthy life loss. Nice face. I got to hang out with some church planters here in town this week.
- And it was fun to talk to them and just remember different church plans in the past. And just in that stage of starting out and just seeing different people and how they do things.
- And I've been thinking a lot about the foundations of Christ Church and what we're building into the culture. Or in other words, the manner of life that we're building.
- And when we started Bellicose Church, mission was built into every facet of the foundation. And I believe it must be for Christ Church as well. So I want to look at two main texts of Scripture here.
- So the first one is in Philippians 1, 27 to 30. If you have your Bibles, you can look at it. And the second one is going to be Mark 8. But we'll start in Philippians 1, 27 to 30.
- [1 : 0 6] I'll read it first. It says, Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. So whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you.
- You are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel. And not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation and that from God.
- For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake. Engage in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.
- So he starts this off. Let's take a look at the text here. It says, Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. Okay? Your manner of life. The way that you live your life.
- The manner in which you live your life. And then you might say, Well, what does he mean by that? Well, he goes into the specifics of what he's talking about when he talks about the manner of life being worthy of the gospel of Christ.
- [2 : 1 0] And he says that when I come or see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are three things. It's your standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.
- And so he's saying a manner of life worthy of the gospel is one that strives side by side for the faith of the gospel. So this already flies in the face of our individualistic culture, of normal church culture, which says, As long as I do the right things, I attend the services, and I have certain missional aspects of my life that aim towards the gospel, I'm good.
- But he's saying here that a manner of life worthy of the gospel isn't just someone who preaches the gospel or is intentional with the gospel on their own. It's those who strive side by side for the faith of the gospel.
- And so there's this effort that is involved that executes itself with the saints, with the church. It's a side by side.
- And I'd say, well, what does that mean? What does side by side mean? Like, how close does that need to be? How connected or together does a gospel worthy life have to be?

[3 : 25] Well, he said that he goes, he has more details. He says, he says with one mind and standing firm in one spirit. Okay. So most of you know that you don't just get to one mind by just hoping that it gets there.

If you're married, you really know this, right? It's not like, oh, we're married now. Now everything's going to be one mind and one spirit and we're never going to disagree on anything. Thank God we're married so we don't have to disagree anymore.

No, of course not. That's ridiculous. If anything, it sometimes forces the issue of disagreeing more so because you're forced to make decisions together. You're forced to live life together.

Okay. And so when he talks about being of one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel or standing firm in one spirit, this involves effort.

No one's going to be of one mind in striving side by side for the faith of the gospel without intentionality, without effort, without planning.

[4 : 27] That's never going to just happen. It's like, hey, how's your missional community? It's great. We haven't been executing any effort towards unity and it just happens. It's like, there's no, that's just not how people work.

Right. That'd be like just saying, I haven't involved any effort in the disciplining my kids and they're just angels. You know, like, no, it involves effort. In the same way, if we want to be striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, which we should want, because this is the manner of life that he's speaking of, it's going to involve effort to be of one mind in how we do it.

Okay. And all the more so as a church point, we have to say, okay, how can we, and specifically our church in the context of these missional communities, how can we be of one mind, not just in a general sense.

We're not talking about generic sense here. We're talking about striving side by side for the faith of the gospel. How can we be of one mind in how we strive side by side for the faith of the gospel?

How are we going to do that? We have to have the specific vision of how that's going to happen. We have to have specific plans. We have to talk about it. We have to pray about it. We have to discuss it.

[5 : 40] We have to get in the word about it. The question is, are we doing that? Are we doing that when it comes to mission? Are we doing that with one mind? Are we kind of all doing our own things?

Like so-and-so has this person at work that they are reaching out to, or so-and-so has this neighbor that they're reaching out to. And maybe we know about it, but maybe we don't know about it. Maybe we're even that disjointed where we don't even know who's on mission to who or how that's even going.

Or, oh, you got together to the neighbor? That would have been cool to know. I would have loved to pray for you. Are we striving side by side for the faith of the gospel together?

Are we doing that? Are we doing it with one mind? This is a manner of life worthy of the gospel. The gospel is worth putting the effort in to do it together.

The gospel is worth not having it be a side hustle, but be the main hustle. The gospel is worth us reorienting our life, planning around things, planning our life around the gospel going to unbelievers.

[6 : 50] It's worth doing that. It's worth sacrificing for that. It's worth taking the effort to do that, not just on our own, in our own individual busy lives, but to do that together. Are we doing it?

Are we doing it? And maybe we do it for a little while or we get excited for a little while. But he also says that the way that this manner of life looks is that you're standing firm in one spirit.

There's a standing firm, which means we got to keep at it. We can't waver. We can't start off strong and then let up. A gospel worthy life is one that says, hey, it's worth standing firm.

It's worth holding the line. It's worth continuing to do the things faithfully, side by side, for the sake of the gospel. I'm going to keep at it. And one of those things is praying.

How is our faithfulness together in praying for the lost? If I would introduce you to one of the people I was meeting this week, who's planting churches in this town or in other towns of the earth, and they were in the beginning stages, and you asked them how it was going, and then you asked them what they were doing, and you found out that they weren't praying together for the lost regularly, what would you think about that church plant?

[8 : 13] What would you think about its effectiveness? What would you think about whether it's an actual gospel worthy church? There has to be intentional prayer together for the lost.

And we have to stand firm in it. And it's easy sometimes to look with our natural eyes and think, because maybe I didn't see someone get saved that I've been praying for, that why keep praying for that?

Or I'm not seeing certain people coming or lost people coming to faith. It's easy to look with our natural eye, to look at what we see, to not walk by faith. And what we end up doing is we let up in prayer.

And so the prayer becomes, well, when we have the you-ra-ra corporate moment, yeah, then we'll pray. If we do a fast together, well, of course, then we'll pray.

But we need a whole church. Notice I didn't say some who will lead. A whole church. If we're trying to build a culture that is gospel worthy, a manner of life into the DNA and the foundation of a church, for the sake of the gospel, we will need a group of people that are intentional to keep praying and keep praying and keep praying, saying, Lord, Lord of the harvest, send out workers into the harvest field.

[9 : 31] Lord of the harvest, we ask it in Jesus' name that you would save souls. And we keep praying and we don't let up. And when we have bouts of discontentment or we have moments of where we're losing faith, we confess that to our brothers and sisters.

We come to those in our missional community and we say, hey, I'm having a hard time believing for the salvation of souls. Well, thank you for sharing that. Let's pray for you. And then let's come together again, steadfast and firm in saying, we're going to keep praying.

1 Corinthians 15, 58 says, stand firm, let nothing move in, and always give yourself fully to the work of the Lord.

There's a standing firm that has to happen. Standing firm in one spirit. This is a manner worthy of the gospel. Are we doing that? And again, I'm not asking, are you doing that alone in your own individual life?

If you are, that's great. That's a good thing. That would be encouraging, all right? But that's not church. That's just being a Christian. Church is when we do that, when we stand firm together for the sake of the gospel.

[10 : 45] Standing firm together for the sake of the gospel. All right? Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you. That you're standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

I'm not here all the time with you guys. I'm not in a missional community with you. But I want to hear the same thing that Paul is saying. Whether I see you or I'm absent, I want to hear that you're standing firm, in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

That's what I want to hear. And that's what we should be doing in every missional community. And not frightened in anything by your opponents. Sometimes what keeps us from doing that is fear man.

We're too fearful to preach the gospel. We have a fear of being rejected. We have a fear of saying the wrong thing. Okay? You always got to remember, they're already lost. They already hate God.

You're not going to make them hate God any more than they hate God. If a lost person, everything within them hates God, even if they look like really nice people. You understand that? The sinful mind is hostile to God.

[11 : 51] It cannot please God. This is Romans 8. So you don't have to worry about, oh, I'm going to make them hate God more. No, they already hate God with everything within them. It might be dressed up and look nice, but that's what unbelievers do.

They need to hear the gospel. Okay? And sometimes we get afraid. I don't know if I shared this with you the other day, but this was really encouraging to me. I was listening to someone, they were saying that a lot of times we think that preaching the gospel is like going into a hospital and trying to talk someone into how sick they are and that they need to take this medicine so they can get well.

When really that's not what the preaching of the gospel is. It's going into a cemetery and preaching to a bunch of dead people who can't do anything. And then God, through the gospel, opens up their eyes, resurrects them, and saves them.

Do we believe that that gospel is that powerful that we're not frightened by our opponents? We're saying, no, the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe, Romans 1.16.

That great verse that moved Martin Luther, you know, how many years ago, just like this last weekend. Okay? He said, the gospel is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe.

[13 : 01] When you believe that, you're not frightened anything by your opponents. And if you are frightened and you're thinking, I have this tendency to not share the gospel, to not preach the gospel, I'm afraid to do it.

I don't, I shy away from us planning to do it in our missional communities. If that's you, again, that's something you need to confess to your brothers and sisters. To say, hey, I get afraid a lot when it comes to the gospel.

There is a remedy for that. It's the filling of the Holy Spirit. It's the baptism of the Holy Spirit. When you are filled with the Spirit, much like Peter, you go from being afraid to being bold as a lion.

And this is available for us. He says that when we're not frightened in anything by our opponents, this is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation. And that from God.

For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake, engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.

[13 : 59] Now he's talking about when he was in Philippi, which is documented in Acts chapter 16. He cast out a demon of a woman who was fortune telling, and it was bringing quite a good income for those in the city, and they didn't like that.

And so they ended up beating Paul and throwing him in jail, which he refers to later as saying very shamefully because he was a Roman citizen. Okay?

So again, a lot of times we think, oh, I don't want to preach the gospel or I don't want to get on mission because it's costly. It takes time. It takes effort.

People might reject me. People might be mad at me. Who knows nowadays with the amount of violence that is around that people might even be violent if they disagree with you. There's that fear.

There's that thought in the back. He says, it's been granted to you for the sake of Christ. You should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake. For us to think that the preaching of the gospel isn't going to involve some level of discomfort or suffering is a fool's errand.

[15 : 04] It is going to. It is going to. And we have to embrace that. And we have to be careful that we don't hide behind a fear of loss or discomfort with the gospel and mask it with a sense of community in a local church.

And if that can be a replacement for the church having as one of their main distinguishing markers that they live in a manner worthy of the gospel, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

And we can mask that sometimes by just being a small group of people in a small little church that says, wow, I really like this small little church where we get to know each other and be with each other. And it's just, it's nice.

When there's a much larger group of people that the Bible calls wide is the gate to destruction. We're headed to hell. And we should let that discomfort hit us, that reality hit us, even if it doesn't hit us in the natural realm with someone rejecting us or beating us because of what Paul did, right?

We should let the reality of hell and the reality of the wide gate to destruction shake us out of our discomfort, get us out of our communal lethargy that says, oh, let's just enjoy our small little church and the friendship we have.

[16 : 19] No, we must always, always, always strive for the faith of the gospel and say, no, people need to hear. People need to hear. And he exhorts them to be engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

Paul never counted his life as something worthy to be fought for. He was constantly subjecting himself to discomfort for the sake of the gospel over and over and over and over again.

Are we doing the same? A great picture of this is Mark chapter eight. If you have your Bibles, you can turn to Mark chapter eight, starting verse 31. Mark chapter eight, 31 to 38.

See, this is documented in Matthew and Mark and in Luke. It's this same section of scripture where Jesus is talking about discipleship and what it looks like to be a disciple of Jesus.

And Mark, one of the reasons I love the book of Mark is even though it's the shortest of the synoptic gospels, it always has these little details that some of the other ones don't have.

[17 : 25] which is ironic because it's the shortest one. You'd think if it has more details, it'd be the longest one. No, it just has less info, but then includes these little snippets that you're like, oh, that's awesome. So Mark eight here is no different.

I'll show you in a second. But Mark chapter eight, starting verse 31. It says, He began to teach them, says Jesus, that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again.

And he said this plainly. Okay? And so you have him saying three things. He's going to suffer, he's going to be rejected, he's going to be killed, and then he's going to rise again. So suffer, be rejected, and be killed.

And it says, and then he said this plainly. Okay? Peter takes him aside, and what did he do? He begins to rebuke him. Right?

Jesus says, I'm going to suffer, I'm going to be rejected, I'm going to be killed, I'm going to rise from the dead. Peter takes him aside, rebukes him. And we know from the other accounts of this that he's basically saying, no, Lord.

[18 : 35] You know, this isn't, we won't let this happen or this shouldn't happen. And turning and seeing his disciples, Jesus rebukes Peter. Okay?

So Peter rebukes Jesus. Jesus comes back with his own rebuke. And what does he say? You know, you know the phrase, that escalated quickly? I'd say that it applies here.

It says, Peter rebukes Jesus, and then Jesus rebukes Peter and says, get behind me, Satan. Like, whoa, okay. Get behind me, Satan.

For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. Now, wait a second. What in the world just happened there? How did it just go from, Peter comes up to Jesus.

Hey, Jesus. No, this shouldn't happen. And then all of a sudden, you know, Jesus says, get behind me, Satan. It's like, Satan?

[19 : 31] Where'd he come in here? I thought he was talking to Peter. He's calling Peter, Satan, all of a sudden. To say that things escalated quickly is an understatement. That, you know, that's a pretty, he just changed the temperature of the conversation there.

Real quick, Peter had to be like, what? Satan? You know, but thankfully, we don't have to wonder why he's saying that. He describes right after that in the next phrase, why he's saying, get behind me, Satan.

For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. Okay? So, right away, he detected in Peter a satanic thing.

Okay? And we should take note of this as well, because we're not any better than Peter. We're not any better than any of the other disciples. We too, could be susceptible to a satanic thing.

Much like this one. And so, what is that satanic thing? Setting your mind on the things of God, or not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.

[20 : 39] Okay? Not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. It's easy, sometimes in an even spiritual way. And this is where I think it's most demonic.

We can spiritualize our own selfishness, our own things of man, rather than the things of God. Okay? When we think about the things of God, those are the things that God wants to do, and they don't, they're not always comfortable.

In this instance, they involve suffering, rejection, and being killed. Okay? That was the things of God. Jesus, it says, he said these things plainly.

He said them plainly. This is what God wants. This is what's going to happen. Peter says, no, no, no, no, no. And he says, hey, get behind me, Satan. You're not setting your mind on the things of God, we're on the things of man.

He goes into more detail. He then calls the crowd to him with his disciples, and he says to them, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me.

[21 : 41] For whoever would save his life will lose it, whoever loses his life for my sake, and the Gospels will save it. That phrase, and the Gospels, is only in Mark.

Loses his life for my sake, and the Gospels. Okay? So here he goes into more detail to say, what is he referring to when he says, the things of man and the things of God? He's saying, hey, if anybody, just so you know, this is, this is like baseline Jesus following.

If you're going to come after me, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me. These three things. The problem with Peter in this moment, the reason it was satanic, was that he was avoiding the three prerequisites for coming after Jesus.

Self-denial, taking up your cross, and following me. Jesus plainly described what that was going to look like, and Peter was telling him to go another way.

He had in mind the things of man, not the things of God. It says, whoever would save his life will lose it, whoever loses his life for my sake, and the Gospels will save it. Peter was trying to save Jesus' life.

[22 : 53] You see that? He wanted Jesus to self-preserve. Oh, no, no, no, Jesus. You don't need to die. You don't need to suffer. You don't need to deny yourself. We're not going to let this happen to you.

Peter was coming at Jesus, and almost subtly tempting him to save his life. This is why he didn't say, get behind me, Peter. He knew where that kind of thinking comes from.

The kind of thinking. Jesus is like, okay, this isn't Peter here. I recognize this subtle, insidious temptation to save my life.

And even though it's coming through my friend Peter, I know where it's really coming from. This is, he's unwittingly channeling Satan himself. And then he rebukes Satan.

Says, get behind me. You don't have in mind the things of God. You have in mind the things of man. You're trying to save your life. But saving your life is the opposite of what it means to come after Jesus.

[23 : 57] Coming after Jesus involves self-denial, taking up your cross, and following him. What are you denying yourself for the sake of the gospel?

For the sake of the gospel. So if we're saying, okay, we are going to lose our life for the sake of the gospel, it's going to look like denying ourselves some things.

What are those specific things? If you can't answer that question, that's a problem. Because Jesus said, this is what it looks like to come after him. You have to deny yourself for my sake and the gospels.

So when we're thinking of the gospel, we're thinking of being a church and planting this church and seeking lost people to save. That will, that will, in fact, involve self-denial for the sake of the gospel.

What are you denying right now for the sake of the gospel? What are you saying no to on a regular basis for the sake of the gospel? That's what self-denial is. Your self wants to do something selfish, self-preserving, more comfortable, less denying.

[25 : 06] Ourselves want to do that. And for the sake of the gospel and for Christ, we say, no, no, I will give that up. I will deny that.

To deny something is to say no to it. The danger is to have in mind the things of man and to do church in a way that doesn't involve self-denial for the sake of the gospel.

And we might say, well, yeah, I know. I know I'm supposed to deny myself for Christ. But again, Mark adds this other little detail here. It's not just for the sake of Christ. Verse 35 says for the sake of Christ and the gospels.

He's saying that you have to do this not only for Christ, but for the gospel. And so some of us will be saying, well, of course, every day I deny myself for the sake of Christ. But are you also denying yourself for the sake of the gospel?

You're also losing your life for the sake of the gospel. What are you losing? What are you letting go of? What are you saying? I will let go of what I want for the sake of the gospel.

[26 : 10] What are those things? If you can't point to any of those things, you might be living in some subtle, super spiritualized version of church that's not really following after Jesus. Jesus. And it's dangerous.

You might say, no, not us. We're on the cutting edge. We're a new church plant. We left a larger, healthy church to do this. What are you talking about?

Don't think that we can't get comfortable too in our, our, our, our, our comfortable little church with our friends. Don't think that that can't happen. It most definitely can happen.

Most definitely can happen. You think, how could it happen to us? Well, you can ask the same question about Peter. How could it happen to Peter? He was with Jesus himself.

If this could happen to someone who is spending every day with Jesus himself, you don't think it could happen with a small little church plan. Oh, you better believe it could happen.

[27 : 08] It can happen. It for sure can happen. And you know who wants it to happen? Satan. He wants it to happen. He wants to tempt us. Oh no, don't deny yourself.

Don't deny yourself. Don't pick up your cross. Don't take up your cross. Again, the cross isn't a cute little necklace you wear. The cross was an execution tool that the Romans, that basically said they perfected.

One of the most excruciating deaths you could possibly have. When he says, take up your cross, he's not saying, oh, do something that's convenient. He's saying, brutally execute yourself and your desires for the sake of Jesus and for, for the sake of, of the gospel.

The gospel, again, this goes back to Philippians 127. The gospel is worthy of our self-denial. The gospel is worthy of us taking up our cross because he took up his cross because he endured the pain of his cross.

I'll pick up the cross in my life. What is the cross in your life? What does it look like? What is the inconvenience, the discomfort, the things you don't want to give up? That is your cross that you have to take up daily.

[28 : 23] We all have to do that every day. Paul says, I die daily. I pick up my cross daily and follow him. And I follow you, Jesus, into discomfort. In this case, it was suffering, rejection, and even being killed.

This was the cross Jesus picked up. He picked it up. And he says then to us, if anyone come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it.

But whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospels will save it. Beware of the insidious, subtle voice of Satan that tempts us to not give up our life for the sake of the gospel.

There are many people who live outwardly looking Christian lives that never inconvenience themselves for the sake of the gospel. That have schedules that are full of activity, full of fellowship, even with church people, but don't inconvenience themselves for the sake of the gospel.

That don't plan around, mission, and engagement for the sake of the lost, for the gospel. But that's a life that's lost. That's a life that you will lose.

[29 : 33] The life that you keep, the life that you save, is one that you give up for his sake and for the gospels. For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? What can a man give in return for his soul?

For whoever is ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the son of man also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his father with the holy angels.

What causes people to be ashamed of something? Well, you're ashamed of something when it's a little lackluster. Right? If you ever brought your friend to church and something really cheesy happens, or the preacher's really bad, or the worship's really off key, and you're just kind of like, oh, why did I bring him this Sunday?

You're kind of ashamed, right? You're embarrassed. You're ashamed. Typically, we get ashamed of things when they're not excellent, when they're not good. Right? Maybe it's sometimes you even have, you brought a friend over to the family, and mom and dad do something really embarrassing.

You just say, uh, you know, it's like, I am ashamed of my family. I'm ashamed of my church. Right? This happens. I know you guys are smiling, because it's happened to us all at one point in time.

[30 : 53] Okay? That's why we get ashamed. When something we hope would be really good, is not really good, and then we're just kind of like, oh, man. It's no different with Christ.

Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, okay, we can end up being ashamed of Jesus, because we're not proud of who he is, and what he's done. We're not boasting in the cross, boasting in who he is, boasting in his grandeur, his greatness, his love for us, the fact that while we were still sinners, he died for us, the excruciating nature of the cross, and what he endured for our sake, that the creator became, the creator became, he was in the womb of a created woman, and it was a baby dependent on a mother, and then lived a life where he was treated as if he was just any old person, that he was beat and suffered and died, and was excruciatingly crucified on a cross in a shameful way, all for us, and when we forget about that, when we take to the Lord's table, we forget what that really means, when we wear gold crosses around our neck, and just think, wow, look at that shiny, beautiful cross, we don't think of what a cross really is, but it was a torture device, used to execute criminals, and we forget who Jesus is, and what he's done, we can start to get embarrassed by him and his words, and we don't get, we're not in touch with the, what the gospel means to us on an everyday basis, we're not taking the time to really dwell, and saturate our life, in the goodness of who Jesus is, and what he's done, and really get to a place, where we're not just knowing about Jesus, but we're excited about Jesus, you have a far less likely, you're far less likely to be ashamed of Jesus, if you know exactly who he is, and what he's done, and you don't think it's some lackluster thing, right, that's what you get ashamed of, you get ashamed of things, you don't really know very well, that kind of seem like, ah, this isn't that great, you know, even people with sports teams, will be very proud of their horrible sports team, right, and that they'll have this sense of loyalty, and that sometimes, when it comes to sharing the gospel, we lack this loyalty to Jesus, have we forgotten who he is, and what he's done, have we become ashamed, says whoever is ashamed of me, in my words, in this adulterous and sinful generation, of him will the son of man, also be ashamed, when he comes in the glory of his father, with his holy angels, we need to be so excited, about the words of Jesus, and the person of Jesus, notice how he says both, whoever is ashamed of me, and my words, are you ashamed of the words of Jesus, are you ashamed of the nature of the cost, that he proclaims, that he says things like, unless you deny yourself, you cannot be my disciple,

Luke 14 says, unless you give up everything, you cannot be my disciple, unless you hate father, mother, wife, and kids, you cannot be my disciple, do we get kind of ashamed, by those words, we get kind of ashamed, when we see the rich young ruler, and that he went away sad, just think, man, Jesus, kind of hard on that guy, you know, it's like, do we get ashamed, of that kind of stuff, do we get ashamed, of the cost that he places, on following Jesus, do we get ashamed, of not just who he is, but the words that he said, we have to get a right view, of who he is, and the words that he said, we have to get to that place, and if we're ashamed, we need to repent, and say, God, I'm so sorry, for being ashamed, of your words, what does your daily cross look like, for the sake of the gospel, how is it painful, there is no such thing, as taking up your cross, that doesn't involve pain, and inconvenience, there has to be, a losing of our life, I was reading the other day, about, many of you guys, know this story, there's some controversy, of the details of this, but in 1519,

Cortes famously, supposedly ordered his men, to burn their ships, upon landing in Mexico, and the act was a strategic maneuver, to eliminate any possibility, of retreat, forcing his 600 men, to either conquer the Aztec Empire, or die trying, okay, basically saying like, hey, we're gonna go in there, and we're either gonna take this ground, or we're gonna die trying, and we're gonna get rid of the, the escape route, we're gonna burn the ships, we're gonna sink the ships, we're gonna do whatever we can, and it made me think, you know, when you're doing a church fight like this, and sometimes it gets hard, there can always be this sense, well, I can always go back, well, I can always, you know, I cannot, we can always do something else, well, I can always just, you know, enjoy it, to a certain degree, I don't really need to give myself fully to it, have you burned the ships, you know, even Elisha, when he was called by Elijah, Elijah comes at him, throws his cloak over the top of him, and calls him to follow him, and he says, hey, can I go say goodbye to my mom and dad, he says, yeah, go ahead, and what does he do, he burns the cow and the plow, and he goes, because what was the cow and the plow for him, that was his living, there was no going back after this, if he's going to follow Elijah, if he burns the plow, and he burns the cows, he eats the cows and burns the plow, there's nothing to go back to, and I think sometimes, we can have this kind of following of Jesus, that has a little bit of self-preservation in it, where we think, well,

I can always go back to what I did, or if this doesn't work out that good, I always have this friendship, or this friendship, and you know, if I'm not enjoying things, as much in this church, I have other friends, or other activities, Elijah burned the cow and the plow, he let it, he counted the cost beforehand, and said, I'm all in, I'm not going to, I'm not going to waver in unbelief, in Luke chapter 14, 28 to 30, Jesus says, which of you desiring to build the tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it, otherwise when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, saying, this man began to build, and was not able to finish, like that's a person, who's worthy to be made fun of, what a fool, they started building, and they weren't able to finish, they'd mock him, why, what did he do, he started to build, without counting the cost, we as a church, we've started to build, I want to remind us, have you counted the cost, we don't want to be the fools, that people mock and say, oh, let's wait a second, you started building this, but you never thought about, what this would cost you, you never thought about, what it would be like, to start a church, and give up your life, for the sake of the gospel, and that it would be inconvenient, and that it would be painful, and that it wouldn't be, just smooth sailing, you didn't think about that, before you started, that's the kind of person, that someone mocks, this man began to build, and was not able to finish, may it not be said of us, and maybe we didn't do that, at first, maybe some of us, didn't realize the cost, that it would take, to be a group of people, that says, we're not just going to start, a church, where we're just going to have, us four no more, hang out with our besties, have this little small, comfortable group of people, don't have to have, one of those big churches, where everybody gets lost, in the shuffle, we're going to be the people, we get to know each other, we're going to have lunches, after our Sunday mornings, once a month, we're going to just enjoy, this small little tight knit, group of people, we're going to do that, that's what we're going to do, and yet avoid the cost, of the cross, yet avoid the cost, of the gospel, and just say, no,

[38 : 36] I don't want to, I don't want to think, that I don't have enough, to complete it, I'm burning the ships, I'm burning the cow, I'm burning the plow, I'm all in, whatever it takes, whatever Jesus requires of me, I want to do it, commitment to mission, requires a loss, of something else, what have you lost, for the sake of the gospel, what are you losing, for the sake of the gospel, it's always costing, it's always costing, and if you don't consider, on the front end, how much it costs, what you will end up doing, is find yourselves, having long conversations, with your flesh, negotiating with your flesh, trying to make it, work out to where it's cheaper, trying to make it out, because you realize, I don't have enough in the tank, to do this long term, so I'm going to try to negotiate, a version of Christianity, that doesn't cost me everything, and you end up having, these long conversations, with the flesh, you end up being indecisive, you end up being unreliable, and it's because, maybe that, that cow, we can still hear, the sound of that cow,

I know that plow, is just sitting there, I can just go back anytime, you got to put that, that cow to death, and burn that plow, just say, I ain't going back, burn the ships, so to speak, burn the ships, I'm going to take up my cross, I'm going to follow Jesus, I'm going to deny myself, it involves, a radically reorienting, our life around, shared mission, together with a group of people, side by side, for the faith of the gospel, each missional community, should be this, each missional community, should be building family, in the context of mission, are we doing that, or are we building family, without mission, and just saying, well we got to build family, well that was one of the words, for this year, we got to build family, well we can't do it, at the expense of mission, there's no such thing, as a healthy plant, a healthy church plant, that doesn't have mission, as the, as a constant, pushing forth, and you guys are probably saying, man he's been talking about this, every Sunday morning, yes, yes, that's my job,

I should be annoyingly so, like this is the only way, we have a healthy church, this is the only way, you build real family, if you just build family, by looking at commonality, and a certain level of chemistry, you'll always lose, we need to, be choreographed, with our level of commitment, to one another, where we say, hey, this is going to involve, a death of self, this is going to involve, a certain level, of reorienting our life, of planning around things, of a group of people, in each missional community, getting on mission together, it happens to happen, it's going to cost time, effort, discomfort, patience, patience, the Bible says, through faith, and patience, we inherit the promises, we love those faith preachers, it's just like, faith, faith, faith, but no, you never heard of any, the patience movement churches, you know, what movement are you in, we're in the patience movement, we like things taking really long, nobody likes that, nobody likes things taking long, patience is required, it's costly, it involves steadfastness, going along obedience, in the same direction, doing it together, and not falling off, so that people are doing things, on their own, never letting people, do things on their own, just saying, we're going to be, on mission together, for the gospel, in each one of these, missional communities together, specific people in places, it's going to be teamwork, it's going to be togetherness,

D.A. Carson famously said, nobody drifts into holiness, well I'd like to say, nobody drifts into mission, okay, no one drifts into mission, it's not like, oh, I just kind of naturally, drifted into this inconvenience, of forgoing, some of the time, I would take for myself, and with my friends, instead, mobilized together, on mission to people, I don't know, that aren't believers, that I don't know how to reach, that aren't, that are sometimes hostile, towards me, that involves continual planned, that involves the cost of planning, the time of planning, the inconvenience of planning, you don't drift into mission, which means we can't be passive, or apathetic, when it comes to mission, or missional communities, if someone asks, how's it going as far as mission, or missional communities, if we don't have specific answers, if we don't have specific plans, you think that that's going to, build a healthy church, there's no way, there's no way, it's not going to happen, the devil loved the lulls in the sleep, and it just, just hoping that our church, grows with new people, just hoping that people might come, okay, that ain't, that's not how it works, we have to be intentional, if you, and the people in your missional community, don't bind together, to go reach lost people, who's going to do it, there's no cavalry coming, right, like no one else, is going to come and do it, we don't have a whole team of evangelists, who are just waiting to come here, we're just waiting until then to come, we don't have some slick marketing campaign, right, no one's coming, because, we have this great marketing idea, to get people here, we have to get on mission, you have to ask the question, if I were a missionary to Raytown, or to Grandview, or to Kansas City, what would I do, if I was sent there as a missionary,

I was just there, okay, I'm dropping you into Grandview, or Raytown, or Kansas City, I'm dropping you in there, and just like, okay, you're a missionary there, how are you going to win people, what would you do, what would you do, every missional community, should be able to answer that question, because that's exactly, what a missional community is, it's a group of people on mission, to specific people and places, it's us saying, okay, well, I'm going to have to, really plan my life, in accord with the people, I'm on mission to, see like, how can we reach them, I'm going to have to talk, with the other people, that I'm doing this with, on how we're going to do it, it's going to involve, a lot of prayer, it's going to involve, waiting on the Lord, it's going to involve, hearing the Lord, it's going to involve, strategize, it's going to involve failure, trying things, and then not working, and going back to the drawing board, and just, how many missionary, biographies have there been, about people reaching out, over and over, and it's, no one coming to Christ, no success, when they preach the gospel, but what was the thing, that caused them, to have a book read about them, they didn't give up, they didn't go back, they kept going, they kept preaching, they kept strategizing, they tried different things, they stuck with it, and we need to do the same, if you were a missionary, to any of these areas, of the city, what would you do, how would you spend your time, how would you relate, relate with the rest, of the church, who was also dropped, into these places, on mission, what would you do, those are great questions, to ask each other, those are great questions, to discuss, even in your missional community, to say okay, we have been dropped in here, what are we doing, how are we going to reach, lost people, we can't major, on being communal, and familial, and gathering together, and laughing together, eating together,

[46 : 04] I love how much, we laugh together, I love how much, we enjoy one another, I love how much, we enjoy meals together, I love how long, how we like to linger, with one another, in each other's homes, but if that is the major, kind of fruit, of our life together, and we're not, doing that unto, for the sake of the gospel, it's just going to be something, that's good for us, and lost people, will continue to be lost, I close with Galatians 6, 7, and 9, this is in the NIV, it says do not be deceived, God cannot be mocked, the man reaps what he sows, whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh, will reap destruction, whoever sows to please the spirit, from the spirit, will reap eternal life, let us not become weary, in doing good, for at the proper time, we will reap a harvest, if we do not give up, have you lost your life, for the sake of the gospel, are you living in a manner, worthy of the gospel, in our missional communities, together, side by side, for the faith of the gospel, are we doing that, you reap what you sow, what are we sowing, when it comes to mission, are we hoping, are we sowing, are we wishing, or are we sowing, are we hoping and wishing, or are we praying, are we hoping and wishing, or are we investing, are we doing it on our own, or are we doing it with our, missional communities, together, amen, amen, let's stand,