

Looking to scripture to authenticate our story.

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[0:00] Man, this is a key verse for every follower of Christ. If you're a follower of Christ, you need to know this verse. This is one of those verses that you should memorize.

You should be able to quote this verse because it is one of those verses that just gives such clear direction for who you're supposed to be as a follower of Christ.

And so that's part of the section that I'm dealing with this morning. In fact, if you found your place there, we're going to read it together beginning in chapter 9, verse 20.

So if you found your place, let's look at this and hear what the Lord has to say to us today. Beginning in verse 20.

Then he said to them, but who do you say that I am? Peter answered, the Christ of God.

[1:08] And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, 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 on the third day, be raised. And then he said to them all, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.

For whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself or his soul?

For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed. When he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the coming kingdom of God. Father, may you bless the reading of your word this morning.

[2:23] We thank you for it. And we pray this all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Be seated. It's good to hear the kids in here.

It's almost like an amen, you know. You never know when they're saying amen or they dropped a toy, but I'll take it as an amen however it comes. I think somehow for us as we prepare our minds for this verse, I think it's easy for us deep down just kind of to hope we're going to get by.

That we're going to get over somehow. I heard about a guy that was selling his horse and he was going to sell this horse for \$1,000.

And he went door to door asking people if they'd buy the horse and only one person was willing to buy it. But they only offered him \$500. And so he was really disappointed.

Then he goes home and the horse is dead. So he goes back to the guy and says, I'll take the \$500. And then he immediately leaves town for a month.

[3:44] So when he comes back, he is anticipating running into this guy that he sold the horse to. And so he's really dreading it. He's going to see this guy. He's going to hear all about it.

And when he sees the guy, the guy is just big smiles. He runs up. He hugs him. He says, man, thank you so much for the horse.

And the guy's just kind of blown away. He's like, well, man, the horse was dead. What do you mean? He says, well, he says, look, I meant to talk to you about the horse.

The guy says, I don't even care about that. I'm not worried about that at all. Well, here's what I did. He said, when I realized the horse was dead, I sold raffle tickets.

I sold them for a dollar apiece. And I sold 10,000 raffle tickets for a dollar that if you win the raffle, you get a horse.

[4:41] And so, of course, I did the drawing. One guy won the horse. But when he came, he realized it was dead. And, of course, he complained. So

I gave him his dollar back.

Some of you will catch on later. He got a lot of money. It was kind of a joke. All right. Point being, I think in our minds somehow, we think we're going to get over, we're going to get by. And when it comes to something like discipleship, I don't think we realize how much we're influenced by our culture, how much we're influenced by our education, how much we're influenced even by the way that we've grown up doing church. And not necessarily influenced by the scripture. Like I said from the beginning, our goal is really to continue to reform ourself back to the scripture.

That has to be the process of our heart and mind continuously. That can never go away. Because the natural tendency is for us to drift away from those things and start doing it our own way.

[6:04] And so we have to keep looking back to fundamentals in the scripture and say, does my story line up with or conform to that? That's why we talked about our testimony in those terms.

We looked at Paul's testimony and we said, does my story really line up with the testimony of somebody whose life has clearly been changed in the scripture?

And if it doesn't, it's not just that I need to come up with a story. If I don't have a legitimate experience of not realizing that I didn't know Christ and having some encounter with Christ where I come to know Him in repentance and faith, where my life is changed, then it's not just a matter of having your story right.

It's that you're not going to heaven. It's that when you die, it's after this judgment and you're not ready for it. That's the idea and why it's so important that you get your story straight.

Not because you just need a story to tell. It's because it's coming up against the reality that you need Jesus Christ in your life to forgive you of your sins or you're facing the penalty of your sins on your own.

[7:26] Right? This is the importance of the gospel. That's why we preach the gospel. That's why we preach Christ in Him crucified, risen, and coming again. It's why we do what we do.

We're not going to get over. The wisdom of this world, Paul said in 1 Corinthians 3, he said, The wisdom of this world is folly with God, for it is written, He catches the wise in their own craftiness. So somehow deep down in our little colorful imaginations, we think we're going to get over it. And maybe somehow we're going to be rewarded in the end or at least we're going to get by.

Maybe the good's going to outweigh the bad or something. And unfortunately, we're not going to come out on top that way. And in Luke 9, this is what Jesus is doing.

He's really setting the record straight. Because there's some ideas that people are already emerging with that are competing with what it actually means to be a disciple and be a follower of Jesus.

[8:31] He's correcting some distorted assumptions that people have about what it means to follow. And all of this is happening in the context of Him revealing Himself.

And even as you notice here, He's saying, Don't tell all this just yet. There's some things that have to happen. I'm going to suffer and I'm going to die and I'm going to be raised again.

And He's telling them really, in essence, the gospel. He's explaining these things to them and He's called them together. He's given them power as followers, but as disciples.

He's given them power over unclean spirits to proclaim the message. He is about to send out the 72 to go and preach. They're going to go door to door and go and spread the gospel.

And in this context, He's telling them, And as you go and as you preach, you're going to see Satan fall like lightning. And the reality of the preaching of the gospel and the authority of that preaching and what's happening in the spiritual realm as we proclaim Jesus, Satan is falling like lightning.

[9:46] He thinks he's reigning. He thinks he's in charge. He's got authority in somebody's life. And then in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, somebody comes to repentance because they hear the preaching of the gospel and they turn to Jesus.

Their life is transformed and Satan falls like lightning. He falls out of their life. He falls out of an exalted place. And as he's the accuser of the brethren, the Scripture gives the picture that he's in heaven and he's making a case against the brethren.

And in this moment, the Scripture says, those followers of Jesus that are preaching the gospel are doing something that's causing Satan to fall like lightning.

Lose his place. Lose his authority. Lose his argument. This is happening after Jesus has fed the 5,000 and they've seen the baskets come back and all the people were fed and there's all this leftover and they've seen this miraculous thing and not just that, but so many miracles that Jesus has done.

They've seen who he is. But they're also seeing what happens to those that preach the gospel. Even though Satan is falling like lightning from heaven, we see him at work in this world.

[11:07] As the disciples are preaching the gospel, they're seeing the persecution start to rise against Christ. It's going to happen against them. Herod is going to hear what they're preaching and he's not going to like it.

John the Baptist's head is going to be severed and put on a plate. Why? Because sometimes preaching the gospel and talking about the principles of God is going to put you at odds with the morality of the world.

It's going to put you at odds with the political spheres in the world. And sometimes that preaching of the gospel will bring you to a place where you'll lose your head over it.

And as Jesus is preaching the kingdom, this is the picture that he's giving to the disciples of what it means to follow him. You are going to see Satan fall like lightning, but he hates you.

He wants to sift you like wheat, Peter. He wants to destroy you. People are going to actually hate you for my sake.

[12:20] You're going to go like sheep to the slaughter. You still want to follow me? You still want to be a disciple? There's going to be some victorious moments.

There's going to be some things that are awesome to see. That's going to be great. And when he's doing miracles of feeding the 5,000, the crowd loves it because everybody loves some free food. Amen? But when the persecution comes, you're going to see whether or not you're really a disciple. When the food is not there and the free food stops and the persecution comes, are you still going to want to follow Jesus?

Discipleship is not you selling the horse and making out with the money. Discipleship is you losing the horse and forgetting the money because you live by principle and precepts so that you please God, and that's the goal of your life.

Christian people in our generation have lost sight of what discipleship is. There's a book that came out many years ago now. It was actually in 1966.

[13:35] A book was written by a guy named Philip Reif. And the book was called *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*. And he's talking about just the transition in our culture of going away from being religious to being more therapeutic.

And in this, the book's called *The Triumph of the Therapeutic*, he coins the term moralistic, therapeutic, deism. And he's saying, that's what Christianity is becoming in America.

A deism meaning that God kind of set things in motion and then just withdraws. That's deism. But it's not just deism. It's a moralistic deism that I'm just going to be a better person, a better you kind of person.

And it's therapeutic. That means that you're going to be working on being a better you. That's the message of our culture. He described the shift of thinking and he said it this way.

He said, the death of God in the West has given birth to a new civilization devoted to liberating the individual to seek his own pleasures and to the management of his emergent anxieties.

[14:52] 1966. Religious man, he said, who lived according to belief in principles that ordered human life around communal purposes had given way to psychological man who believed that there's no transcendent order and that life's purpose was to find your own way experimentally.

Man no longer understands himself to be a pilgrim on a meaningful journey with others, but as a tourist who travels through life according to his own self-designed itinerary with personal happiness as his ultimate goal.

What a picture. This is not discipleship in the Christian church. And if you don't think that this has affected the way you look at discipleship and the way that you pursue God in our culture, you are mistaken.

You see it everywhere. It's how to be a better you. Sermons that are designed to tell you five ways to be more productive in your home or five ways to be a better employee or practical application off the chart.

The preaching of the authoritative word of God has taken a back seat, a back burner, and a bottom rung on the ladder. And if I want to know the Lord, it's going to be all about my practical application in every practical way in my life.

[16:24] And really, it's kind of a divorce from the divine and an adoption of the psychological. I just need to think better about it. The Puritans would say, Reformation ends not in contemplation, but in action.

And what they meant by that is that if our theology is not working its way out into action that's showing transformation of life, then there's something wrong with our theology.

We don't start with practical application. We start with the divine word of God. And we decide what practical application needs to look like. What does it mean to be a disciple?

What does that look like? And Jesus says, Who do you say that I am? As he's talking to the disciples in verse 20. Peter answers, the Christ of God. And then Jesus goes into the gospel, what's about to happen.

So in this passage, I'm looking at three factors to help us understand discipleship. So if you're following on your notes, it follows that pattern.

[17:38] First, it's the call of discipleship. Then it goes into the cost of discipleship. And then to the crown of discipleship.

So beginning in verse 20, we're talking about the call. So notice how he says this here in verse 20. Okay? Verse 20, he's ending part of a discussion that he's had.

Who does the crowd say that I am? Et cetera, et cetera. But then he said to them, Who do you say that I am? Peter answers, the Christ of God.

This is Peter's declaration. You hear it elsewhere where Jesus said, On this rock, I'm going to build my church. Not on Peter as a pope, but on the preaching, on the fundamental teaching that is revealed to him.

Who revealed this to you? Peter. God revealed this to you. That Christ, that Jesus is the Christ.

This is the fundamental thing that the church is going to be built on.

[18:42] This picture that he gives here, Jesus starts explaining the Christ of God true. In verse 22, he explains what the Christ is going to do.

The Son of Man must suffer. So the Christ of God is what Peter calls him, and then Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man. The Christ of God and the Son of Man.

And what he's referring to is the revelation of who he is in the Old Testament. He is the Son of God, divine, 100% God. He is the Son of Man, which means he's human in full human form.

100% God, 100% man. Not 50-50, but 100-100. He is completely God in the flesh, 100% man.

And this is important because it's how the Scripture reveals him. We need to understand how the Scripture reveals Christ. He's not just a good teacher. He's not just a good man.

[19:44] He is God in the flesh. That's who he's declared himself to be. That's who he's affirmed to be because of the resurrection. And so as he walks through it, he gives us just the picture of a complete gospel.

So it's the Christ of God, Old Testament, Son of Man, and into the Christ must suffer. He's going to come in the flesh. He's going to suffer.

He's not going to be received. All of this is fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Who do you say that I am? And as he walks through this, you can go through every sermon preached in the book of Acts and you'll find the same exact pattern of the message.

The affirmation of the Scriptures in the Old Testament who said Christ was coming and then Christ's coming in the flesh. He's going to suffer. He's going to die.

He's going to be buried. He's going to be raised again. He's going to come again to judge the living and the dead and therefore we are to respond. Every time the gospel is preached, that pattern is going to be followed.

[20:51] If you look at the gospel of Mark, the whole gospel of Mark follows that pattern. If you look to Romans in the deep theological treatise of the book of Romans, he's going to unpack every one of those parts of who Christ is.

This is the preaching of the gospel. We're not just preaching healing. We're preaching the healer. We're not just preaching good teaching and good theology.

We're preaching the wisdom of God in the person of Christ and what He's taught. There is a subtle difference in some of that that our churches are not seeing the distinction in.

And because of that, we're not preaching the gospel. We're preaching something else. It's the therapeutic gospel. It's a worldly philosophy, but it is not the gospel of the Scripture.

He is the Christ, the Christos, the Anointed One, which indicates He's the Messiah of the Old Testament. And it's the gospel as He describes it, the gospel, the Evangelion, which is just a word meaning good news.

[22:03] Right? Everybody likes good news. Hey, there's free Whataburger today, a free Whataburger meal. All you've got to do is go through the drive-thru.

How many are going? Right? And you're like, really? I'm kidding. There's not. But if you thought there was, man, you're like, what? Man, that's good news. I want to go see about this. I'm getting kind of hungry, James.

It's preaching long. I need to see what this is about. It's good news. And he strictly charges them. I like what Spurgeon said. He said, this is what we preach.

We preach Christ. And Christ, and Christ, and Christ, and nothing else but Christ. What do we preach? We preach Christ.

In fact, I was listening to an audio book of Charles Spurgeon as he's talking about preaching the gospel. and the description in the book was just saying how Spurgeon had kind of an aversion to just saying the preaching of the gospel.

[23:06] And I'm like, why? The scripture says preach the gospel. But it was because in his day so many people were using it to mean so many different things. And so, instead of saying preach the gospel, Spurgeon would say preach Christ.

I preach Christ. And when we go, we are to preach Christ. So that there's no confusion about what we're preaching because we are to preach Christ and Christ and Christ and Christ and nothing else but Christ.

It is a complete message. And it's also a message that implies a personal response. This is the key to discipleship.

The gospel demands a response from you. You can't hear the gospel that Christ died for your sins and be neutral in this.

And just say, well, I'm still trying to decide who Jesus is. Well, that's fine. But realize you're in a state of enmity against God.

[24:14] He's revealed himself. He's died on the cross to pay the penalty of your sin. You're not neutral. You're actually on the other side. Jesus said, you're either with me or you're against me.

So to be in a state of I don't know what I should do about that is actually to be at a state of hostility toward God according to the scripture. you're not Switzerland.

You're at war. And you can say that you're trying to make up your mind. But the reality is if you die right now, you die without Christ, without his forgiveness, without his atoning work on your behalf, and you spend eternity separated for him in hell, and that is just for God to do that.

It's fair. We're not preaching healing. We're preaching a healer. We're not preaching giving. We're preaching the giver.

We're not preaching just theology. We're preaching the wisdom of God. We're not preaching church. We're preaching the Christ who calls us together. Otherwise, we're just going to end up preaching and teaching people to love theology and not love Jesus.

[25:33] Or teaching people to love healing and not love Jesus. Or experience and not Jesus. To love morality but not love Jesus.

And it's the question that we have to ask if heaven, and I think it was John Piper that asked this one time and I just love the way he said it, if we think of heaven and we think of the perfect place, perfect temperature, the best food that we could ever imagine, the best company that we could ever have, no sickness, no pain, all the things that we see the scripture describing about heaven, all the joy that could be had, all the goodness that could be had, and if you can imagine all of that and still want it without Jesus, there's something wrong with your gospel.

To want heaven is to want Jesus. All the other things are the benefits that come along with having him. That's the subtle distinction in the gospel that's being preached in our culture and in our day. And if we think we're not affected by that, we're so wrong. And Paul was identifying this as not being a new problem. This is actually, as Jesus describes it here to the disciples, you see it as the emerging problem even with the very first disciples.

So this is a fundamental issue for us. And Paul even says that when he's talking to the Corinthian church in 1 Corinthians 15.1. He said, now I would remind you, brothers, as if they've forgotten something.

[27:16] I would remind you of the gospel. This is fundamental. I would remind you of the gospel that I preached to you that you received in which you stand and by which you are being saved if you hold fast to the word that I preached to you.

Unless you believed in vain. Meaning, that there are some of you believing a partial gospel and you're believing in vain to no end. Like it's not meeting the end that you think it is.

Because it's a partial message. For I delivered to you that which was of first importance, the priority, what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures.

That he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures. I would remind you because the gospel demands a response.

It's the call of God and discipleship is the gospel. It calls you to come to Jesus. And if you come to Jesus, you'll be changed and you get everything.

[28:26] You don't lose anything coming to Jesus. You gain everything. You see things for what they are like Paul did in his testimony. I count all these things like they're rubbish so that I may gain Christ.

call of God. Then there's number two, the cost of discipleship. Cost of discipleship is understood in the cross of Christ.

We see the gospel and it gives the whole picture. The cross gives us a very distinct symbol. And he explains it. In verse 23, he says, and he said to them all, not just the twelve, right, mind you, this is all who are wanting to follow him.

He says, and he says to them all, if anyone would come after me, this is not the call to be an apostle. This is not the call to be a special kind of disciple.

This is not a call to be like the green beret of disciples, like you're going to be the best of the disciples. Or you're going to be like on some different level of discipleship.

[29:40] No. This is what it means to be a disciple at all. If you're going to be one. Right? This is some clarity.

That's why I say, if you're a follower of Jesus, you need to know this verse. It's imperative that you understand the gravity of this call and the response that you should give to it.

What that means to become a follower of Jesus. It's not just walking down the aisle shaking the preacher's hand and I want to be baptized and I want to join the church. It's a call to discipleship in Jesus.

He's called you to come to Him so that you can learn His word, that you can learn His ways, so that you can walk with Him and do His work.

There's a cost. The cost of discipleship is seen in the cross. That's the symbol, the death of Jesus.

[30:40] So He says, there's 23, He says to them all, if anyone would come after me, if anyone would follow me in this direction, follow me as a teacher, follow me in my ways and my word, then what is He going to do?

Let Him deny Himself and take up His cross daily and follow me.

For whoever would save his life would lose it. Whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. A disciple lays down his life because of the cross of Christ.

This is the picture of self-denial for us. The word He uses there for deny implies a rejection of self-centered living. I'm rejecting me being on the throne of my life.

What does it mean for you to be a disciple and to follow Jesus? It means there's a turning point in my life where I realize my sins separated me from Jesus. Now I've had an encounter where I'm realizing the reality of the gospel that Jesus Christ died for my sins and wants to save me and the Holy Spirit has illuminated.

[31:55] The only way you understand this is that the Holy Spirit illuminates you to that truth. So you understand the gospel and you're strangely drawn to Him. That's the work of God. And as He draws you to Him, your response to that is a response of faith, trusting in Him, putting the full weight of my being in Christ because of what He's done for me, what He's going to be in me, and turning from sin.

Which means not that I'm perfect, but that I've turned from sin, I've rejected this, I've gotten off the throne of my life, I've asked Jesus to come in and to take the throne.

Right? You can't be a disciple without this. It's not just me coming and saying, well, I think it's the right thing to do.

That's what I did. I was 14 years old. My birthday. Right around my birthday. This time of month, hey, this week is my birthday. FYI. Okay? But my birthday.

I'm 14 years old. I remember vividly sitting in the worship service and going, I need to get baptized. I think it's time.

[33:08] I'm 14. Becoming an adult. It's an adult thing to do. I'm going to be baptized. So I lean over, I tell my mom, I'm going to be baptized this morning. She's like, okay.

She's excited. I walk down the aisle. I don't remember what I said to the preacher. I don't remember what he said to me. I thought it was a noble thing. I thought it was a good thing. But I wasn't saved. I didn't know Christ. There was no seeing myself as a sinner separated from Christ. There's no encounter where I'm wanting to know Christ. I'm wanting to do the right thing.

That's not wanting to know Christ. And there was no change after my life. I just went back to being who I was. I just continued through the motions. And the reality is, that's not what it means to be a disciple.

To be a disciple, Jesus said, come and follow me. And he goes to the disciples and we see the picture of them. And the scripture says, they dropped their nets and they followed him.

[34:09] Does that mean everybody's got to quit their job to come follow Jesus? No. But it is a symbol of something, a reality where they're leaving who they were and they're coming to follow Christ.

They're not going to be who they were. Deny yourself. That doesn't mean that you, you know, choose vanilla pudding or regular white milk instead of chocolate milk, right?

Chocolate milk is from the Lord. Denying yourself is not just making it painful for myself to walk through life. That's not what he's talking about.

It's the fundamental direction of your being. I want to please Christ. He's the teacher. He's the master. He's the king.

I'm going to come after him. I'm going to follow him. You see it, Mark chapter 3. He strictly ordered them not to make him known.

[35:12] He went up on the mountain. He called them to himself to be his disciples, those who he desired. And they came to him. And he appointed the 12 so that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach.

And in that, fundamentally, you have what every disciple is called to. That you might be with him so that he might send you out to preach.

Send you out to preach. To preach what? Christ. Not just a nebulous kind of gospel, this vacillating gospel, gospel about the gospel kind of preaching that we get these days.

There's some people very dogmatic about being gospel-centered, gospel-focused, gospel-saturated. And I've heard these sermons over and over and over again. And it's amazing, absolutely stunning when you look at the content and see how little they actually talk about Christ.

It's like the gospel about the gospel. What is that? A gospel-saturated life so that I'm always talking about the gospel, the gospel this, gospel that.

[36:22] I use that word if you do gospel bingo, you win every time, you know. It's about Christ. A relationship with Christ.

It's talking to people and hearing their testimony and hearing nothing about them coming to Christ. They're talking about, I came to church, I went to church, I joined a church, I got baptized, I did this or I did that.

It's not the same. Jesus said, follow me and I'll make you fishers of men. I'll make you fishers. I'm actually calling you to be a disciple so that you'll learn my words and my ways for a purpose so that you'll be a fisher of men. That you'll go and preach Christ. That the salvation that you have in your testimony, wrapped up, becomes the platform for you to proclaim Christ.

Christ. The conditions, denying yourself, that's what it means to be a disciple. It means, are you going to follow him if you're in poverty?

[37:28] If you have nowhere to lay your head, these are the questions that Jesus starts asking. You still going to follow me? If you're poor? I want to be rich. I want to be taken care of. Well, what if it means you are going to be poor?

What if our culture moves in such a way that for you to be a follower of Jesus, means you can't work for Phillips? Huh? Or you can't work for whatever company you're working for.

Well, I'll be self-employed. Well, what happens when it becomes illegal for you in your self-employment because of the things that you preach or teach or believe? You still going to follow?

Well, I mean, I might have to make some concessions here or there, right? What if it means leaving father or mother? I've never seen people as angry with somebody as when their family member comes to faith in Christ and they hate it because they don't believe or they're indifferent or they're hostile to Christianity.

But I've seen it in our culture. I've seen it overseas in mission work. Somebody comes to faith in Christ and their family is so livid and hateful toward them and in some places in some countries they will murder them.

[38:51] They would rather them be dead than come to faith in Christ. It's the same in our culture on a lesser scale. We don't have the same kind of persecution. It's a softer persecution in our culture but they still hate it.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was in a culture where Christianity was becoming less popular at least a biblical kind of Christianity.

Nazi Germany is on the rise and if you don't hate Jews which the national church has gone that way and they've embraced that but there was this undercurrent of people that are trying to believe the scripture and trying to follow the scripture and they're getting persecuted and Dietrich Bonhoeffer ends up being killed.

He wrote his book in prison The Cost of Discipleship which is a book that every Christian should read. It's a helpful book for you to think in terms of persecution and difficulty.

He said the cross is laid on every Christian. The first Christ suffering which every man must experience is the call to abandon the attachments of this world.

[40:05] It is that dying of the old man which is the result of his encounter with Christ. As we embark upon discipleship we surrender ourselves to Christ in union with his death.

We give over our lives to death. Thus it begins. The cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise God-fearing and happy life but it meets us at the beginning of our communion with Christ.

When Christ calls a man he bids him come and die. Discipleship.

The cost. And I can say through every trial every obstacle every difficulty yeah there's been cost. Every time you want to follow Jesus and grow in your faith there's going to be some cost. A discipleship that costs you nothing is worth nothing.

[41:16] Does it cost you to follow Jesus? I'm a giver. I tithe. I give offerings to the Lord. I actually give before taxes.

My first fruits go to the Lord. That's not just because I'm a pastor. I did that when I was not a pastor. I do that because I want to honor Christ in my finances. And so I give.

I give sacrificially. I give above just a 10%. I'm not saying that to brag. I'm saying that because we are called to cost. cost. And sometimes what we end up doing is we give as if we're tipping God rather than tithing to God.

I feel like I can give him about 20 bucks this month. And so I give God a tip. Thanks God for being so faithful in my life. Here's my tip.

And you don't even give. What's a tip now? Like 20% at the restaurant? I can't afford to eat out anymore. You don't even tip God. The reality is there's a cost.

[42:25] There's a cost with my time. It's not just my treasures, the things that I have. It's my time.

Am I giving God just the leftovers of my time? Like I'm busying myself all week long. I'm doing stuff, everything I want to do in my spare time. Now I've got to work but in my spare time I'm carving that up and I'm giving that somewhere and am I actually giving to the Lord my time?

Does it cost me anything to serve Jesus? Does it cost my time? Does he have the clock? I mean, I know how it is on Sunday morning when I'm preaching too long and granted I do that fairly regularly.

I get it. But the reality is my time my own or is it the Lord's? My service to him during the week.

Is it, I'm so tired, I've done all that I wanted to do this week. I went fishing, I went hunting, I went to the ball games, I did this or that and then Sunday morning comes, oh, I'm so tired today, I think I'll stay home.

[43:36] Right? Cost. It cost me. It's conviction that I show up for worship on a Sunday morning. I believe that I'm to worship the King of Kings.

He's called me to worship him. I need to sacrifice my time. I need to minister to others. I need to bless others. I need to serve others. Not just my own family, not just my own stuff, not just my own crisis.

You're going to have crisis every week. Hardship every week. I remember seeing somebody, off script, okay, it's dangerous, but I remember seeing Carolyn Fessler.

Remember Carolyn Fessler? Some of you know her. She's in a wheelchair. Her health has been bad. Her back is terrible. She's on medications, et cetera, et cetera. We had a clean up day at church one time and I remember so vividly.

Call after call, oh, can't come today, not feeling so well. I got a tickle in my throat. You know, whatever. I don't know what that means, but I'm not feeling so well. My little tum-tum, it's a little rumbly today, so I'm not going to come to church.

[44:47] I'm not going to come to service day. We're going to have a clean up day. I'm not feeling so good. And so, I go out to clean up day and Carolyn Fessler's there in her wheelchair and she crawls out of her wheelchair down to the ground and we're cleaning up around the building and she has some shears and she's going along, crawling along on the ground with the shears, trimming the grass that's overgrown on the sidewalk.

I thought, my soul, she just stole everybody's excuse. Right? I mean, she went out, she can't even do this.

I'm feeling terrible. I'm like, you need some help. She said, I got it. Next year, she painted the yellow on the curbs. She said, it's all I can do, but I can at least get down here.

I thought, oh my goodness. Your talents, they belong to the Lord. You do things that other people can't do.

You do things and you're skilled at certain things in your life and the question is, are you using that for the glory of God as a disciple? Is that part of your platform somehow that you get to serve God and serve His people?

[46:07] You say, well, I don't have many talents. Can you cook? You can do something, right? Some of you can fix stuff, you know?

You do a little drywall here or there, you do some repair, you do things, you know how to do stuff and those talents that you have, everybody doesn't have. Right? Are you using that for the glory of

God?

What is a disciple? A disciple understands the cost. The cost is the cross. I die to self.

I live for Jesus. I've died to sin. I've been raised to walk in a new life. I'm a new creation in Jesus. Everything that I have belongs to Him. That's what it means not to be a Green Beret disciple or a pastor or a missionary or a preacher.

That's what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Jesus said, whoever does not follow me, Matthew 10, whoever does not take up his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.

[47:19] Whoever finds their life will lose it and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it. And in that parallel passage to this passage, he adds that, Matthew adds that little extra dimension.

Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. So it's not a matter of us running around like Monty Python in search of the Holy Grail and being mostly dead.

Or, you know, what's the princess bride? Not dead. He's just mostly dead. Right? That's how we live our Christian life.

I'm not dead to sin. I'm just mostly dead. I'm still kind of alive to sin. That's not discipleship. Doesn't mean I'm not going to fall.

I will fall. But it's not part of who I am anymore. It's not the direction of my life. Jesus said in John 15, I am the true vine.

[48:23] My father is the vine dresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit, he takes away. Every branch that does bear fruit, he prunes that it may bear more fruit.

Already you are clean because of the word that I've spoken to you. Abide in me and I in you as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine. Neither can you unless you abide in me.

I am the vine. You notice the wording here of saving and losing.

Try to save your life, you lose it. You try to profit and you lose. You think it's profit, it's not profit. It's funny how people will waste money when it's not theirs, right?

Like government. Government wastes money. It's not their money. They don't care. Like a politician. Should we spend a billion dollars there? Sure, sounds great. Big deal.

[49:29] It's not my money. Or the president or some senator says, oh, we gave your state this money. It's not your money. That's our money. We're taxing. That's our money. It's not your money.

You're a steward of that money. You are a steward to us. But when it's not yours, you just don't care. So there's all these tax things. I was reading a list of all the things our tax dollars go to. Gender studies in Pakistan. \$500,000 given of our tax money to go pay for gender studies in Pakistan. Or Anthony Fauci being given \$477,000 for transgender monkey studies. not your money. Who cares, right? At \$200,000 this last year given funding a pilot project to match transgender LGBTQ youth with adult mentors online.

Nothing. Nothing could go wrong with that. What does it cost us?

[50:44] See, there's the cost of the Son of God is life to give us life. You have Him, you have life. You don't have Christ, you don't have life.

You read it in 1 Chronicles as you were going through and you made it through all of the genealogies and stuff, you know, if you're reading along. And you made it through talking about David and you came to that point just a week or so ago.

David, after 70,000 Israelites had fallen dead because of pestilence. Because David numbered the people. And David is interceding.

You remember? Remember the story? He's interceding. He's asking God, don't punish them for my bad decision. There's consequences consequences to sin. And as this story unfolds, there's this little short story.

But man, if you stop and camp out on it for a minute, it's like, whoa, what is he saying? Over Jerusalem, an angel of the Lord is standing there, the Scripture says, and his sword is drawn to destroy the city of Jerusalem.

[51:48] What? Because of disobedience. And so here, an angel of the Lord, and you go through those stories in the Old Testament, an angel of the Lord slew 100,000 people.

One angel. I don't know how powerful they are, but they're pretty amazing, actually. And in this moment, David sees an angel of the Lord with his sword drawn, and he's about to destroy the city of Jerusalem, and he prays, and he says, Lord, please hear my prayer, my intercession for the people. And he goes to sacrifice, and he's going to sacrifice to the Lord to just plead with the Lord, Lord, pass over your people and don't bring this judgment. And it says that David and the elders, clothed in sackcloth, fell upon their faces.

And David said to God, was it not I who gave command to a number of the people? Was it not I that sinned and have done this great evil? But these sheep, what have they done? Please let your hand, O Lord my God, be against me and against my father's house, but do not plague your people. And then it goes down, 1 Chronicles chapter 21, verse 24. He finds this threshing floor and he's going to sacrifice to the Lord. And the guy says, no, I'll just give it to you.

[53:01] Ma'am, I want intercession too. We want this to stop. I'm just going to give this to you. And in 24, it's his response. King David says to Ornan, the guy that's offering it, he says, no, but I will buy them for full price.

I will not take for the Lord what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing. Discipleship that cost me nothing worth nothing.

Well, let me speed ahead. Number three, it's not just the cost which is the cross, but it is the crown, crown of discipleship understood in the coming of Christ.

The crown. Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed of when he comes in his glory. He's coming again. He's coming to judge the living and the dead.

And when he comes, not baby in the manger, it's reigning king. He's coming again. And he's going to claim what's his. Everybody that's at enmity with him, man, they have something terrible awaiting.

[54:27] Truly, I tell you, there are some standing here that will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God. You don't want to be ashamed that it's coming. There's a crown for those that trust in Christ.

A crown of righteousness. A disciple longs for the coming of Christ. I think of when my, you know, when my wife is gone and she goes to, you know, out of town, goes to see Ansley out of town or goes up to see Carly.

Carly's off at school again. She goes up there and I can't go for whatever reason. She's gone. Man, I can't eat. That's because I, she's usually making sure I'm taken care of in some of those things.

I can't sleep. She's not there. You know, I, I, I'm just miserable. You know, there's something in me because we've been together 30 plus years now. Man, it's just, I'm longing for her to come back.

I, I'm looking for her to come back and as it gets longer and longer, the longer it goes, the more I'm like, man, when's she coming home? And then if it takes longer, I'm like, where are you? You know, I'm longing for that.

[55:39] Isn't it interesting that when the scripture describes the relationship between the church and Christ, describes us as the bride of Christ, the longing that we should have for the coming of Christ, it's what we look forward to.

It's the crown of discipleship. One day, all of the cost is going to be forgotten because of what's gained in heaven. everything that we've got coming is going to be glorious.

And he used that word glory to mean something that's bright, exceedingly bright. When Paul has the vision of Christ on the road to Damascus, it's a bright and shining light, brighter than the sun.

And the scripture says that that's what awaits us who trust in Jesus, that we shall shine in the presence of our Father brighter than the sun. That's why Paul said in his testimony in Philippians 3, 7, but whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

And indeed, I count everything lost because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord. For his sake, I have suffered the loss of all things and count them as rubbish in order that I may gain Christ.

[57:01] the crown. He's coming. One day, we're going to give an account for the things done in the body, both good and bad, according to the scripture.

As a follower of Jesus, I'm giving an account at that judgment seat. For the good, that's praiseworthy, good, but I'm going to hear the bad, the things that I should have done that I didn't,

the secret sin that nobody knows about, all of a sudden now made public.

Well, the good news is that in Christ, all of those things are covered in the blood of Jesus. And although every sin, one right after another, will be accounted to the nth degree, Jesus, at the end of it, will say, it's all covered in the blood.

I died for every one of those sins. And you are free and forgiven because of what I did for you. you don't have Christ.

You don't have the crown. You don't have what you're looking forward to and it's why heaven is something different to you. It's a longing for Christ who is the crown.

[58:13] And you look through the letters that Paul writes and the encouragement that he gives to the churches, it's the same encouragement that we need to hear. It's pointing to the difficulty of life. How many have had difficulty in life?

Anybody? I've had some. You have. You've had tons of it. Every week, there's crisis and difficulty. You're facing all kinds of things. And the promise to you is, yes, it's hard.

Life is hard. But there's something better coming to those in Christ. And when Paul writes in 1 Thessalonians, it's amazing to hear how many times he points to it in there.

1 Thessalonians 1.10, he says, and we are waiting for his son from heaven whom he raised from the dead, Jesus, who delivers us from the wrath to come. That's what, that's who I'm looking for.

In 1 Thessalonians 2.19, he said, for what is our hope or our joy or a crown of boasting before the Lord Jesus at his coming? Is it not you who have trusted in Christ too? We're going to stand before Christ and with you.

[59:21] We all get to rejoice together. 1 Thessalonians 3.13, he says, as he's praying, I'm praying that he may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his saints.

Because what's coming is so much better. It's so much bigger. It's Christ who's coming to get us and he's taking us home one day. Every tear is going to be wiped away.

Every difficulty is going to be forgotten. You will not think about the difficulty of your job for eternity. I've got news for you. You're not going to think about the death of your spouse for eternity.

It's not going to burden you for eternity because in the light of Christ, it's going to be so glorious that even as painful as that is, you'll be forgotten.

I don't know what that looks like. Aren't you glad he's coming? 2 Thessalonians 1-7 I'm praying that he grants you relief to you who are afflicted as well as to us that when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with his mighty angels in flaming fire inflicting vengeance on those who do not know God and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ they will suffer punishment of eternal destruction away from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of his might when he comes on that day to be glorified in his saints and to be marveled at among all who have believed because our testimony to you was believed and now concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and to our being gathered together in him brothers we ask basically keep your eyes on him and in verse chapter 2 verse 8 he says and then the lawless one will be revealed whom the Lord Jesus will kill with the breath of his mouth and bring to nothing bring him to nothing by the appearance of his coming that's discipleship it's living with a longing for the coming of Christ and so you have to ask yourself am I a disciple of Jesus

[61:46] Spurgeon said you cannot be Christ's servant if you're not willing to follow him cross and all what do you crave a crown then it must be a crown of thorns if you're to be like him do you want to be lifted up so you shall but it will be upon a cross because all who come to Christ must come to a cross we come to our invitation time this morning it's really the picture of discipleship for us discipleship is a distorted picture the factors of understanding discipleship for us is understood in the call of discipleship which is the gospel the gospel of Christ the cost of discipleship which is the cross of Christ the crown of discipleship which is the coming of Christ because a gospel and discipleship that costs us nothing is worth nothing father we come to you today and our prayer is that you would just be with us

Lord we're reforming ourselves continually back to your word getting back to fundamentals about what it means to be a follower and Lord we're GIVE TOGETHER ...
dlategoCIAL THE PRIVATE is how to Sometimes change in the body to press in the so that will break the sins and speak on the