

All Disciples Show (Part 1)

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[0:00] What a joy it is to be gathering together in worship today. It's good to be back at church with my church family.

! Catherine and I and several others from the church and a couple other churches had the opportunity to travel to Greece and retrace the footsteps of Paul on part of his second missionary journey.

It was fascinating. We got to go to places like where Lydia was baptized, the first convert in Europe. We got to go to Philippi, see the jail where Paul was imprisoned at.

We got to go to Corinth. We got to go to Ephesus, Patmos, all these different places. And one of the things that we kept talking about over and over again as we made our way through was the fact that Paul had an unstoppable message and a bold faith.

And with an unstoppable message, the gospel, and a bold faith of taking and making sure that he proclaimed this message everywhere he went, God was able to turn the world upside down.

[1:08] He was able to move and work in mighty ways. And one of the things that we're talking about today and want to focus on is that we have an unstoppable message. We still have the same gospel message that we get to proclaim today.

And God has called us to live this out with a bold faith. And while the unstoppable message has not changed, what we need to focus on many times is having this bold faith that shares this message to those who need to hear it.

And one of the ways that we get to see this encouraged in our life is when we have fellowship with other believers. When we have this spiritual fellowship that not only gives us an example to follow, but also encourages us along the way to live out our faith, to live out this message to this life that God has called us to live.

And so for the next two weeks, we're going to be looking at another component of our discipleship pathway. And the truth that we're going to be considering this week and next week is the fact that disciples show.

We've already talked about the fact that all disciples know. They all know some things. They know who God is. They know who we are in light of who God is.

[2:31] And they know that the only way to receive salvation, the only way to be safe, to have that relationship with God restored, is through faith in Christ Jesus.

So in short, all disciples know the gospel. In addition to this, we've talked about the fact that all disciples grow. They grow in this relationship.

It's not something where we stay stagnant. It's not something where we come to faith in Christ and then never do anything with it. But we're growing in this relationship. And so for these first two components, I feel that we can all understand and appreciate the fact that these are characteristics of all disciples.

But also, in addition to this, we're going to be moving into a couple things over the next four weeks that are sometimes a little harder to wrap our minds around the fact that they are prevalent or that should be prevalent in all disciples.

And so as we begin to look at the fact that all disciples show and all disciples go, sometimes it gets a little more challenging to realize that this is for all of us.

[3:40] You see, with the fact that disciples know and grow, that's something that many times we think we can do by ourselves. It's a personal relationship with the Lord. It's a personal commitment to read the Bible, to pray, to give generously, to do all of these things.

We feel that we can do this on our own. But all of a sudden, as we think about showing and going, then all of a sudden we realize that this is something that we're to do within community.

This is something that we are to do with other people. And so sometimes it gets a little more challenging for us to wrap our minds around that. But we must understand the fact that all disciples of Jesus, not just pastors or missionaries, but all disciples of Jesus show and go.

Now, I want us to consider the fact that disciples show in two regards this morning and next week. As disciples of Jesus, we're not only commanded to show others what Christ has done for us, we are to be shown by others as well.

And so think of it like this. We are to see and we are to show. We are to see and we are to be seen. We are to show and we are to be shown this message.

[4:58] This week, our focus is going to be on seeing, on the fact that we as disciples should be looking to others' lives, having someone to invest in our life.

And to help us understand the necessity of looking to godly examples, I want to invite you to open with me to the book of Philippians. Philippians chapter 3.

We're going to start in verse 17 and work our way through chapter 4, verse 1. It's just a few verses of scripture here, but in these few verses, what we see is a necessity to look to godly examples. And so if you have a copy of God's Word, I want to invite you to follow along as I read, starting in Philippians chapter 3, verse 17. It says this, Brothers, Now from this passage, there are a few observations that we can make when it comes to discipleship and the fact that all disciples should be showing and be shown some things.

The first observation that we made from this passage is this, Disciples see the example of godly believers. The importance of disciples seeing the example of godly believers.

[7:13] Brothers, this passage right here says, Brothers, join in imitating me. Where we first, when we first read this, it kind of sounds a little arrogant of what Paul is saying, right?

He says, Be like me. Imitate me. I can only imagine if I go into staff meeting on Tuesday and I tell the rest of the staff, I said, All right, guys, I want you to imitate me.

They'll start laughing at me like, Yeah, right. We're not doing that. But Paul here, he's saying, Imitate me. But it's not in an arrogant sense. It's not in a, Hey, to be exactly like me.

It's what he's saying is, Follow my example in looking to Christ. Follow my example in keeping Christ at the center of everything.

And if you look back at the chapters leading up to this in Philippians, you will see this example that Paul is saying to imitate him. The example of putting no confidence in the flesh.

[8:11] No confidence in our works. Paul's already told him, He says, Look, If anybody has confidence in the flesh, in their works to gain salvation, it's me. And he says, But I don't put any confidence in that.

And so he's saying, Follow my example in this. Follow the example of realizing we are all a work in progress. Follow the example of forgetting what's behind and straining forward to what lies ahead. Follow his example of keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus. Follow his example in being consumed by one thing. Jesus Christ and him crucified.

Paul is saying, Follow my example in these things. He realizes he's not a perfect example. In fact, that is one of the ways that we can relate to him and follow his lead.

We realize that we are all works in progress. We all have much that needs to change in our lives, to be molded and informed, to look more and more like Jesus Christ.

[9:15] But what he's saying is, Follow this example. Follow the example. In a sense, This is discipleship. Having people in your life that you can look up to, that will mentor you, that you can follow their example, to have someone more mature in your life, that you can see how they live out their faith and be inspired to do the same.

We need examples in our lives. We need people that we can look to, that we can see how they're living their life out. Many have said much of the Christian life is far easier caught than taught.

In other words, much of the Christian life, we figure out and we learn by looking to other people's lives. Yes, we hear the words. Yes, we hear what we should be doing.

But much of the Christian life is following the example of others who have gone before us. who are more mature in this world. We need to see those examples in our lives.

Several, and this is something that we all need to understand because when we look to people's lives, when we look to those godly lives, it illustrates for us sound teaching.

[10:30] Several of you have mentioned that I'm running up quite the tab with my kids right now using them in sermon illustrations. For those that you don't know, every time I use one of my kids

and a message, I have to pay them \$5.

And so let's just hypothetically speak here and just say, just imagine I had a child that is learning how to drive right now. So just, I mean, nobody in particular, but just imagine that I have a child who's learning how to drive right now.

And what has been interesting is to see how he pays attention to how Catherine and I drive much more than he used to. We are, or him or her, whichever child it is.

But, but, but he's paying attention to how we are driving. And so when, when we tell him things, when we say, hey, you need to make sure you stop completely right here.

You need to make sure you don't go up to speed limit. You need to make sure you look both ways. You need, he's now applying those same things to us and making sure that we do those same things that we're telling him to.

[11:36] And it's trickling down to his other siblings. And it's not just with, with Catherine and I. I was riding with Charlotte the other day and she told me, she goes, you know, sometimes Mimi drives a little fast.

And I said, oh really? She said, yes, sometimes Mimi drives a little fast, but she told me that it's okay to go five miles an hour over the speed limit. I said, oh, she did.

Okay, well thank you Mimi. Thankfully, my mother-in-law is at the Methodist church and as long as all of you agree to keep that story here, it will never make its way there.

But, what I've found is that so many times what we do leaves a far more lasting impact than what we say. And so, we've got to have people in our lives that we can look to at how they're living their life.

We can look to their life and say, hey, they've got their eyes fixed on Jesus. They're following Jesus. They're trying to follow him with their lives. Jerry Bridges, in a book that I would highly recommend called Growing Your Faith, he says this about the importance of fellowship and having the example of others to follow.

[12:51] He says this, he says, none of us have the spiritual wherewithal to go it alone in our Christian lives. Spiritual fellowship is not a luxury but a necessity vital to our spiritual growth and health.

Biblical fellowship involves both a sharing together of our common life in Christ and sharing with one another what God has given to us.

He says, one of the most important things we can share with one another is the spiritual truth that God has been teaching us which might be of great help to fellow believers.

He says, none of us are meant to do this alone. None of us are meant to go this alone and try to just pave the way ourselves but we are to have this community, have this fellowship with other believers to live this life out.

we need the example of others in our lives. It's obvious when we look at our children and realize that they need these examples in their lives. They need parents that model for them what it means to follow Jesus.

[14:03] In fact, as parents, we are our kids primary example in this. It's wonderful to bring them to church. It's wonderful to encourage them to go to youth camp.

It's wonderful to encourage them to go on a mission trip but they need something that is far more impactful than these things. They need parents that day in and day out show them what it looks like to follow Jesus.

They need parents who not only make sacrifices to follow Jesus but teach them the importance of making those sacrifices. But here's the thing. It's really easy for us to see this connection with children.

It's really easy for us to see this connection with being this is something that is important to teach our children. But Paul is not writing this to the children's ministry at the church of Philippi.

He's not writing this letter to the youth group at the church of Philippi. He's writing this letter to the church as a whole. He's saying we all need this in our life.

[15:12] We all need the example of others who are looking to Jesus who are focused on Him. We need this example in our lives. We need this discipleship.

We need this fellowship. We need this as a part of who we are. He's writing to the whole church. We all need examples to follow in our lives.

That is why the church not this building but this group of believers is so important so vital in our Christian walk.

We have people who are experiencing the challenges of life like we are and we can come alongside each other and do life with one another. We have those who've gone before us who've experienced the difficulties of this life and we can go to them and say is it worth it and they will say every single time absolutely it is.

So I want to ask you do you have godly examples in your life that you can look to that you can look up to those that aren't just voices on a podcast or people that you watch on social media but people that you know that you have a relationship with that you can call that you can text that you know will be there for you.

[16:31] You see we can get a lot of great you can get far better teaching online than you can right here. There's a lot there's some really incredible gifted teachers out there but it's more than that we need people in our life that are going to do life with us that are going to come alongside us that's not just something that we experience on a screen but something that we experience with other believers.

You see in this in this book Paul has already spent time with this church in Philippi. He's already built relationships with them and that's why when he says things like he does in Philippians chapter 1 verses 29 and 30 it carries a great deal of weight.

You see in Philippians 1 verse 29 he's telling this church he's telling this group of believers a difficult truth. He's telling them that sometimes in this Christian walk we're going to have to suffer for Christ. There's going to be things that we go through that are difficult that are challenging and he's telling them this difficult truth but they receive it better because of his relationship.

I want you to listen to this. Chapter 1 29 and 30 says this 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.

[17:55] You should also suffer for his sake. This is a difficult truth but then he goes on to say this he says engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

He's saying you're going to experience suffering but remember I did as well. I was there with you. You saw me experience this suffering. Yes I was there and brought the gospel message and Lydia was saved and was baptized there and then I came in and cast this demon out of this young slave girl this spirit of divination who was making her owners much money and because I did this they got really upset with me caused a riot beat me threw me in jail but while I was in jail Silas and I were praising God.

We were singing and all of a sudden it gave us an opportunity to share the gospel of the Philippian jailer and him and his whole family came to faith in Christ. He says you remember me experiencing these things the suffering that I experienced while you were there but I'm here to tell you it's worth it and so because of that relationship he's able to share this truth with them and these words carry a great amount of weight.

You see we need the example of strong believers in our lives. There are people that I intentionally make time for each and every month to go and have lunch with them because I need this in my life. I need people who will pour into me and who have gone before me who are further along in their relationship with the Lord who will invest in my life as well.

[19:36] We all need this as a part of our Christian walk. This is part of what it means that all disciples show and part of that is we have other people showing us.

We get to look at their life and see that example over and over again. One of the reasons that we see this is important is because it's a tremendous blessing in our life to help you grow in your walk with Christ.

You see, I've never had a conversation with someone where I was sharing with them some hard things that I was going through. I've never had a conversation with someone who was actually growing in their walk with Christ, who was actually looking to Jesus in the midst of everything going on in their life.

I've never had somebody say, nah, it's really not worth it. No. Every single time, no matter what they've experienced, if they're growing in their relationship with the Lord, if they've got their eyes fixed on Jesus, every single time they'll say, yes, it's hard, but it's worth it.

But it's worth it because Jesus is worth it. So we need it because of the encouragement it is, but we also need this because this is what God has called us to do, and not doing it as being disobedient.

[20:50] Paul says, brothers, join in imitating me and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. So we must keep our eyes.

Disciples see the example of others, the godly example of others. But not only does Paul give us an example to follow, he gives us a warning in this passage.

He gives us a warning that there are going to be those who don't give us a godly example. And so the next thing that we see is that disciples see the danger in following bad examples.

Yes, disciples see the good examples, the godly examples to follow, but they also see the danger in following bad examples. It says this, for many of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ.

Their end is destruction, their God is their belly, and they glory in their shame with minds set on earthly things. You see, I don't think Paul is referring to people who were openly speaking against the church in public.

[21:56] I don't think he's referring to people who were in the church and now they said, I don't want anything to do with that anymore, and now they're speaking and talking bad about it. Of course, Paul would say don't follow that example, but I think what he's talking about here is people within the church who are saying one thing with their mouth, but their life is living something completely different.

He's saying don't follow that example. Don't follow the example of people who say one thing, but their life is screaming something very different. It was those who claimed to be a part of the fellowship, but their lifestyle was an open contradiction to what they claimed.

For these people, their end is destruction. You see, for these people, they claimed to be followers of Christ, but there was a sharp contrast in what they claimed to believe and how they actually lived.

These people claimed to know Jesus, but they focus on themselves. But here's the thing, Paul's sharp warning and the way that he says this has led many people to think that Paul was probably talking about leadership within the church.

People who had a voice on a regular occurrence, people who were openly sharing, but yet their life was a contradiction to what they were saying. He's telling them be very careful about those people.

[23:22] don't follow that example. And sadly, there is no shortage of people who claim to know Christ, who can say the right things, but their life is a complete contradiction.

We see it in prominent places. We see it from politicians who claim Christ, but their life is a complete contradiction to that claim. And sadly, where we often see this is the same place that Paul is likely referring to inside the church.

church and often in the office of pastor. Over the past few years, we have seen more and more pastors walk away from the ministry, being forced to resign or to rethink their views on certain issues because they got caught.

The reasons are many. Pride, abuse of power, pornography, adultery, you name it, and there's a good chance that a pastor has been involved with it.

And so what we're seeing here is that we must choose carefully who you are going to follow. Now, I'm not saying that we only follow perfect examples because none of us in here are perfect, but we're following examples that keep their eyes fixed on Jesus.

[24:37] We're following examples of those that realize, hey, I'm not there, but I'm working towards it. We follow the examples of those who not only see Jesus, but their life shows that they're actively trying to follow him, and we follow those examples.

Don't follow bad examples no matter what they say. But also I want to encourage you, don't give up on the Christian faith because of bad examples or because of a bad experience either.

This isn't a new struggle. Paul is warning the church of Philippi of this 2,000 years ago, but it's something that we must consider today as well.

And so not only are disciples able to see the example of strong believers, not only are they able to see the danger of these examples, but finally we are able to see that disciples follow the good examples they see.

Disciples follow the good examples they see. Verses 20 through 4, 1 says this, it says, but our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him to be subject to all, to, uh, enables him even to subject all things to himself.

[26:00] Therefore, my brothers whom I love and long for, my joy and my crown stand firm thus in the Lord my beloved. left.

Several years ago, we worked our way through the entire book of Philippians, and I'm sure that each and every one of you remember every single thing that we talked about in the book of Philippians, and that there's really no need in me giving a refresher here, and since you remember it all word for word, but some of you may not have been here, so let's just do a quick refresher for something that we see at the beginning of Philippians.

In chapter 1, verse 27, Paul tells us, he says this, he says, only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. The word that Paul uses here to describe this life, it has a citizenship implication to it.

In fact, I love how the ISV, it translates this, I think probably better than most of our translations that we have, it says this, it says, the only thing that matters is that you live as good citizens in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ.

We are called to live in this world as citizens of another world. We are called to live in this world as citizens of another world. We are called to live in this world as citizens of heaven, as citizens of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[27:27] We are called to live in this world, but our home is somewhere else. And in just a moment, we're going to briefly take a look at what this means and how this gets applied to our lives.

But before we discuss that, given the context that this is given in, I believe Paul is setting us up for this. He's letting us know that in order to live this life, we need godly examples in our life.

In order to live this life where we are living as citizens of another place, we must have those examples who are modeling this for us in this life, who live in this world as citizens of another.

And so how do we do this? How do we live as citizens of another world? We do it in two ways. First, we let one citizenship take priority over the other.

We let one citizenship take priority over the other. And two, very closely related to this, is we let one citizenship influence the other.

[28:35] We let one have a bigger priority, a higher priority in our life, and we let that one have influence over the other. And so this plays out in all kinds of ways.

And I just want you to consider this with me for just a moment. I am thankful. And I know that many of you are thankful for the freedoms that we get to experience in this country.

To be able to gather together today like this, to open God's Word freely and discuss it, I am thankful for that. We get to worship without persecution. I am thankful that I get to call the United States of America my home.

But my allegiance to this country, as great as it is, must always take a back seat to my allegiance to God. My allegiance to this country, as great as it is, must always take a back seat to my allegiance to God.

There is absolutely nothing wrong with being patriotic. This is a patriotic church. I consider myself to be patriotic. But our allegiance to our country or to a political party must always take a back seat to our allegiance to God.

[29:49] We must make sure that our citizenship in heaven takes priority over everything else. We must let that citizenship influence the latter.

We must set our minds on heavenly things where our true citizenship is, where our true hope, our true treasure is, where Christ is, who will transform this lowly body to be like his glorious body.

This is where our minds must be fixed on. And we live in light of Christ each and every day. This is where the examples we should be following fix their eyes.

And so when you look to people who are caring for the vulnerable, when you look to people who are caring for orphans, who are doing all that is good and right and true, who are giving to the poor, who are speaking edifying words to one another, who are outdoing one another with good works, who are showing no partiality or racism, who are putting the needs of others before their own, who are doing nothing with grumbling or disputing, who are shining as lights in the world, we should say this looks a lot like Christ.

This looks a lot like living for another kingdom. This is what it looks like to be heavenly minded, to be focused on the things of heaven and let those things influence this life.

[31:15] We should show and attempt to show the world a glimpse of our heavenly home. So I want to encourage you to find godly examples in your life. Avoid those who claim Christ but their life

screams something completely different and set your gaze, fix your eyes on the things that are above, not on this earth.

And so how do we do this? We look to the examples of others. We look to those who are focused on scripture, who are focused on the things of heaven.

We come alongside them. We see the example that they set for us, this modeling that they have done for us. Think of it like this. Have you ever thought about why a little Australian child has an Australian accent?

It's because their parents, it's because what they've heard over and over again. Charlotte, our youngest, she has a pretty good southern drawl. You know why she has a pretty good southern drawl? Because of her mother.

No. We see these things all the time. We see it play out in so many different ways. We see how modeling this example of setting an example, we see how this plays out in different people's lives.

[32 : 29] We see how children, they'll copy other children. We see the importance of having these godly examples in our life. And so we must keep our eyes fixed on those godly examples.

We must make sure that we are surrounding ourselves with people who will not only show us what it looks like to follow Christ, but will call us out when the time is needed.

So please let us consider and think about this idea of modeling. It is vitally important in our Christian walk. Think about it. How did you learn how to pray? There's a good chance if you grew up in a Christian home, then your prayers sound very similar to your parents' prayers.

Because you heard those things over and over again. There's a good chance the examples that they set for you are the examples that you still live by today.

So make sure you look to godly examples. Make sure you're careful where you look. Not just to any example, but to those who are focused on Christ, who look to Him.

[33 : 33] You see, Jesus' disciples, His disciples spent three years with Him, learning His example. And just before He goes into heaven, just before He ascends into heaven, He gives them the Great Commission.

And He says, go therefore into all nations. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. But then He says, teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you.

Jesus set this example of living a life for others to follow. And I want to encourage you to find those people that you can look to, that will be an encouragement to you, that you can follow their example, and to encourage you to find that in your life.

This passage is a great reminder of the fact that who you hang out with, who you look to, who you let have influence in your life, it matters. Look to and see godly examples.

Those who have their eyes fixed on Jesus, those examples will not only help you to more clearly see the bad examples in this life, but those examples will show you what it means to live as citizens of another place.

[34 : 49] So help us to do that today. Lord, we thank You so very much. We thank You for Your Word. We thank You for what we understand that it means for us today.

Lord, help us to apply it. Help it not to be, just be something that we know about, we get more knowledge with, but Lord, help it to be something that we apply to our lives.

And Lord, I thank You. I thank You for the godly examples that You have placed in my life.

Examples that have pointed me to You over and over and over again.

And so Lord, I pray that we will actively be finding people to look to that will encourage us, that will mentor us, that will come alongside us, that we can look to their life and see how they're looking to You and follow that example.

And so Lord, give us wisdom, give us grace, give us understanding in all of this. And we just thank You so much for Jesus who makes a way for us to live as citizens of another place.

[35 : 49] So Lord, help us to keep our eyes fixed on You. We ask all this in Jesus' precious name. Amen. I'm going to invite you to take your Baptist hymnal and turn to hymn number 628, He Touched Me.

I want to encourage you, if God is speaking to you this morning, won't you respond as we stand together and sing? I may may may may may may may may