

Living to Lose: Matthew 16:21-28

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Preacher: Kole Smith

[0 : 00] Our sermon passage this morning is Matthew 16 verses 21 through 28. This is the word of the Lord. From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be raised.

And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him saying, Far be it from you, Lord, this shall never happen to you. But he turned and said to Peter, Get behind me, Satan, you are a hindrance to me, for you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.

Then Jesus told his disciples, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.

[1 : 29] Well, good morning, church. My name is Cole. I have the pleasure of serving as the youth and young adult pastor here at 4th Memorial. Whether it's be your first or second time or whether you call 4th Memorial home, we just want to say that we are glad that you are here in choosing to join us on this holiday, New Year's Eve.

I do have a confession, though, to make. New Year's Eve happens to be my least favorite holiday out of the entire year. And the reason for that is because historically, I have always made New Year's resolutions on this day.

And every year when it rolls around to the next New Year's Eve, I'm reminded of how I failed at my commitments made in the year prior. In years previous, I've made commitments to eat healthier, go to bed earlier, to spend less time on social media.

Usually, I last about two or three weeks, so at least that's good. But I found anymore, I generally, even within the first month, I failed at my commitment. But this is nothing of irregularity in the United States.

In fact, statistics show that out of every person that will make a New Year's resolution, only 9% will actually be committed enough and faithful enough to bring it about and complete it in the next year.

[2 : 47] In fact, over 50% within the first month give up on it. And so, I will give you guys the tip that I am choosing to do now, and that is to just not make a New Year's resolution.

You can't fail at what you don't make, right? And so, that's my plan going into this New Year.

However, I think that this even speaks into a deeper-rooted problem that not only that we have in America, but all of humanity has.

And this is commitment issues. This problem of that we make these commitments or these ideas, and yet, we lack the faithfulness or the actual commitment itself to bring that about.

And so today, for those of you that have been here for any time, you know that we've been working through the book of John. Each week, we've been working through a passage or a section, but this week we're going to take a little break from that. Given that it's New Year's Eve, given that it's the day of making commitments, I think that it is relevant for us to talk about the greatest commitment of all.

That is our commitment to Christ. And so today, this is what I want us to look at as we dive into Matthew, is this idea of what does it mean to be committed to Christ? In other words, what is the cost of discipleship?

[4 : 03] And so if you haven't turned there yet, go ahead and turn with me to Matthew 16. We're going to be spending the bulk of our time in verses 21 through 28, but before we jump into the text today, I want to do a little bit of background.

Fill you in on where we're at in the biblical narrative up until this point. At this point in Jesus's life, he's about two-thirds of the way through his ministry. In fact, Jesus at this time is heading down to Jerusalem with his disciples.

And for those of us that have read ahead and know what's to come, we know that this is the final trip that Jesus is making. Jesus is heading down to Jerusalem to eventually be arrested, tortured, and ultimately killed for claiming to be the Messiah.

And so here in Matthew, what we see right before this passage that we're jumping in is the culmination of some of these ideas of who is this Jesus Christ?

You see, the book of Matthew can be really broken into three sections of Jesus's ministry. In the first four chapters, what we see is Jesus speaking heavily on the reason for him coming.

[5 : 09] You see, in the Old Testament, we see this idea that a Messiah must come after the fall of Adam and Eve, after the disobedience of Israel time and time again. We constantly get this promise that a Messiah is to come to restore Israel, to bring them out of exile, a conquering hero.

And what we see right before the chapter, the section that we're looking at today, so between chapters four and chapter sixteen, we see Jesus's then proclamation of him saying, I am the Messiah, the one that is promised, the one that has come to restore Israel and set the people free. In fact, if you look with me really quick in 16, starting in verse 15, it says, and this is Jesus speaking, he said to them, but who do you say that I am?

Simon Peter replied, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered him, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And so we see the culmination of this section of Jesus's ministry. Again, he's been building up to I am the Messiah. And finally, what we get is the disciples themselves, Peter, speaking for the disciples, affirming, we believe that you are the Christ.

[6 : 29] You are this one that is promised to come. But before we jump into our passage today, it is important for us to understand how Peter and the disciples and actually all of Judaism, not only then, but even today, the religious Jews view the Messiah.

You see, according to Judaism, they believe that the Messiah to come would be a conquering hero. Most believe that he would be a military leader. And so as they're heading down to Jerusalem and as Peter affirms Jesus, you are the Christ, the Messiah.

In Peter's mind, what he's thinking is we're heading down to Jerusalem to establish God's kingdom here on earth. Jesus is going there to overthrow the Roman government and set up his kingdom. This is a glorious time. And so now jumping into our text, what we see is that Peter's understanding of what he thought it meant to be the Messiah, his understanding of ultimately the gospel message was misinformed.

And so starting in verse 21, it says, from that time, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes and be killed and on the third day be risen again.

[7 : 46] Quite contrary to what Peter thought and the disciples thought Jesus was going to do. And so in response to this, Peter says, and it says in verse 22, Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, say it, far be it from you, Lord.

This shall never happen to you. You see what we see here is Peter right after affirming Jesus, you are the Christ, you are the Messiah, the one to come.

Jesus then tells him, yes, I am. However, as being the Christ, the Messiah, what lies ahead for me in Jerusalem is not me establishing an earthly kingdom, not me overthrowing the government, but rather I will be arrested, tortured and killed and yet risen on the third day.

Peter did not want to accept this. In fact, Peter thinking that he knew better took Jesus aside and were told that he rebuked Jesus. He tried to correct Jesus.

And in response to this, Jesus says in verse 23, and it says, He turned and said to Peter, get behind me, Satan, you are a hindrance to me.

[8 : 55] For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man. You see, we see Jesus then turned to Peter and tell him, you are not thinking with the mind of God, you are

thinking from an earthly, a man's perspective.

You see, Peter here immediately after affirming who Jesus is, instead of then trusting that maybe the Messiah, maybe God himself, the Christ knows what the Messiah is, knows what his purpose and task is.

It's not what we see. What we see Peter do instead is pull Jesus aside, says, I don't think you know what you're talking about. I think you're wrong. I think I know better.

And so what we see here is Jesus not only pull him aside, but he calls him Satan. He says, get behind me, Satan. What a harsh rebuke.

In fact, especially right after what we just saw in the passage previous to this, right after Jesus affirms Peter and says, blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for God has revealed this to you.

[10:04] And yet right after this, we see, get behind me, Satan, for you are a hindrance to me. You see, Peter here is an archetype here for Satan.

That's a big word here, but really what this is pointing us back to, what this should remind us of, this phrase, it should point us back to Jesus wandering in the desert for 40 days.

In fact, this is the very phrase Jesus uses when Jesus was wandering in the desert and Satan was tempting Jesus. And if you remember, what did Satan promise Jesus? If you will but bow the knee to me, I will build my, I will build you a kingdom here.

I will let you rule all over the cities of the earth. The very thing that Peter thought Jesus was going to do. And so what we see is Jesus used the exact same phrase that he used when wandering, that I get behind me.

You are a hindrance to me. In this word, hindrance here, another way to read that is you are a stumbling block to me, Peter. You are a temptation to me. You are trying to divert me from the plan that God has set before me because you think you know better.

[11:24] And what are we told? What is truly the sin here of Peter? What is the mistake that he made? Well, we're told he says, for you are setting your mind on the things of, not setting your mind on the things of God, but rather on the things of man.

You see, Peter was operating from an earthly perspective. He was saying, God, I'm willing to follow you, but when it fits with my conception of you, when it fits with my understanding of who and what I think you are.

And so what we see immediately following this, Jesus then turns not just from, he turns from Peter and now addresses all of his disciples. And he doubles down on this idea. And he says, starting in verse 24, it says, then Jesus told his disciples, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

You see, not only is Jesus saying, well, I'm going to go suffer and be tortured and die, but you as well. If you want to be my disciple, pick up your cross and follow me.

And I think us in American culture in the 21st century, we tend to lose the significance of the cross. For many of us, we wear a cross around our neck as a symbol of hope and remembrance, which is good.

[12:50] But we wear that with the reality of we know of what Jesus did and what he accomplished on the cross, but also after the cross. But I want you to put yourself in the feet of the disciples at that time, because for them to be told, if you want to be my disciple, you will have to bear your cross.

You see, in the first century, to be crucified was the very worst punishment that you could ever receive within the Roman Empire. You see, there's about three steps to being crucified. The first is that you would be tortured.

But after then being tortured, you would then be subject to public humiliation, in that you would have to bear that two to 300 pound cross and often carry it two to three miles up into the place that you would then be crucified.

You would have to carry your own instrument of death to the place that you would then ultimately die. And what Jesus is telling his disciples, if you want to follow me, then walk that road to Calvary. Bear your cross. What an incredibly difficult and demanding thing Jesus is making of his disciples here.

[14:11] And what's interesting here is that he doesn't just say this to the disciples. In fact, what he says, he says, if anyone would come after me, if anyone, pick up your cross and follow me.

And I imagine for most of us sitting here, there is a worry or even a risk here of falling into moralism or falling into a works-based salvation, this idea, if I have to bear my cross, I have to do it myself.

I have to bear this burden, bear this weight to follow Christ, and if I don't, then I'm not a disciple of Jesus. From a very plain reading of this text, that might be what we see here.

But I think there's more underneath the surface here that we need to dig out. We need to understand in order to understand what Jesus is actually asking of his disciples, asking of us today. You see, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a mid-century theologian in the 1900s. He was a German descent and he was a theologian, author, pastor, professor.

[15 : 23] He wrote a lot of books and he tended to write mostly on what does it mean to live in light of the Gospel? What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus? One of his most famous books, *The Cost of Discipleship*, are very topic today.

He writes on this specific passage itself, talking about this idea of bearing our cross. You see what Bonhoeffer said, 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. The cross is not the terrible end to an otherwise God-fearing and happy life, but it means us at the beginning of our communion with Christ.

When Christ calls a man, he bids him come and die. It may be a death like that of the first disciples who had to leave home and work to follow him, or it may be a death like Luther's who had to leave the monastery and go into the world, but it is the same death every time, death in Jesus Christ. The death of the old man at his call. Only the man who is dead to his own will can follow Christ.

[16 : 38] You see as we look at this idea of bearing your cross, as Bonhoeffer draws out here, but even as this text shows us, what is this falling immediately on the heels of?

It's falling right after Jesus rebukes Peter for having his mind on the things of man, not on the things of God. And so what he's laying out for his disciples and for us is that if you turn your mind to the things of God, what is the natural result of that?

The natural result is that you will bear the cross, you will follow me. And here's the beautiful thing, because there's two ideas painted here in this picture of bearing the cross.

One is for the disciples themselves. Jesus here is looking forward. He's looking at the life that lays ahead for the disciples. And what Christian tradition tells us, after Jesus went to be seated at the right hand of the Father in heaven, almost every single disciple was killed for their faith.

And not only killed, but most of them suffered horrific deaths. And so not only is Jesus pointing forward for the disciples, I'm quite literally saying if you want to follow me, if you will be my disciple, if Peter, if you will build my church, this is what's lying ahead for you.

[17 : 55] This is the potential reality of what lies ahead. And yet for us at the same time, what is he telling us? He's telling us that this is a potential reality then for us as well.

For most of us here in America, we will not be persecuted. We will not be killed for our faith. In other places in the world that may be. But here it is not the big things, it is not the big crosses that often we are having to bear unto death.

But rather it is the little crosses in our life, the little things in our life, the little sin, the little distractions, the things that we choose to prioritize over God that draw us away, the things that we choose to put our minds on rather than on God in his priority.

You see, because as we read this and when we see it says that you have to bear your cross, here's the reality of what we know in the 21st century. Jesus bore that cross.

He took it to Calvary, he died and he rose again. And so the weight and the burden of that cross no longer lies on us. It doesn't. Jesus has borne the cross and so when he calls us to bear his cross, what he's calling us is to come under his yoke.

[19 : 11] And what do we know of his yoke? His burden is light and his yoke is easy. And so this call to follow Christ, to pick up our cross, it's a call to run to Jesus.

Ultimately what he says, he says, follow me. That word follow me, translated quite literally, is to cling to. Cling to me is what Jesus is saying here.

If you will be my disciple, if you will put your mind on the things of God, what you will do is put off your old life and you will follow me and not only follow me, but cling tightly to me.

And if you do that, that cross that we're told to bear, there's no longer a burden for us. In fact, that burden turns into a blessing itself.

In continuing on in verse 25, Jesus says, he continues on, for whoever would save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for my sake, he will find it.

[20 : 21] Again, what a hard demand of Jesus. If you want to save your life, you'll lose it. But if you lose your life for my sake, you will find it. You see, as we look here at this idea of life, what Jesus is drawing out is not just the physicality of our earthly life.

He's drawing a juxtaposition for us. He's balancing two ideas in hand of saying, here's your earthly life, here's your heavenly life, your soul, your spirit. And again, he says, for whoever would save his life will lose it.

What he's saying here, if you try to save your life, that is, if you try to live for yourself, if you try to do what Peter did here and say, God, I get to define you. I get to choose what your mission is.

I get to choose when I follow you or when I cling to you, when I bear that cross, when I walk with you. If that's our mentality, he says, if you live your earthly life like that, spiritually you're dead.

That's the reality of it. And yet, on the other hand, what does he say? But whoever will lose his life for my sake, he will find it. You've seen the losing of one's life here is not just death.

[21 : 37] It's not just physical death. But if you will turn your life over to him, he says that leads you into true life.

Because again, what's the reality here for the disciples and for us today? We are told time and time again, this world is not our home. We are but souljourners and wanderers here on the earth.

Our life is but a vapor. And Jesus is demanding of his disciples to live in light of that. That if you truly believe that Jesus is the Messiah, and that he is coming to establish his kingdom, and that he is sitting at the right hand of the Father, and that he is preparing a place for us, then what can this world do to truly harm me?

Immediately following this in verse 26, he says, for what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and yet forfeits his soul? For what shall a man give in return for his soul?

For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels and the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

[22 : 54] So often we like to view God in terms of what's convenient for us. Especially in America, we have these ideas of life, liberty, pursuit of happiness.

In America, I can dream, I can work 40 years and retire. We tend to prioritize these things over God. God may be a priority in our life, but he is not the priority.

You may go to church on Sunday and say, God, I give you that time, but the rest of the week, that's for me. God, I'll pursue your will as long as I'm living in abundance.

As long as life is going well, as long as it doesn't conflict with man's ideas of what it is to live well. You see, Jesus here, he's flipping the whole paradigm. You say, it's no longer for yourself, it's no longer for man or this world that you live for.

[24 : 00] If you are a disciple, and again, if you believe the claims of who Jesus is and what he says, you cannot help but live in light of the kingdom and the reality of who Jesus is.

You can't. That's not an if, that's a guarantee, that is a promise. That if we live in light of the gospel, if we live in light of who Jesus is, what are we told?

Verse 27, but if Son of man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done.

Jesus is coming again. And the promise here is that we each will be repaid according to what we have done. And so in light of that, do not give up your souls.

When you and I die, though we may have stockpiled gold and wealth and possessions, how many of those can you take with you after you die?

[25 : 09] How many of those will last forever? They won't. They will rust, they will rot, they will pass away.

And so what we're told is that the reward that lies ahead for you is eternal and everlasting. Our bodies are but temporary. This life here on earth is but temporary.

And yes, there are conflicts. Yes, there's hardship. But the reality is that Jesus has overcome. And if we live in light of that, we can, with assurance, look forward to the life to come and look forward to those rewards in heaven.

You see here in 27 when Jesus says, his Father will then repay each person according to what he has done.

For many of us here, this should be a source of comfort. This should be a source of joy, of knowing that our rewards lie not here on earth but in heaven. And Jesus is coming again. He is coming again.

[26 : 19] And reward lies ahead. And yet for some, I imagine when you hear this, it is fear and trembling that you are faced with.

This thought of, I will be repaid for what I have done. And it's here that we need to pause though for a second. Because we run a risk of really misunderstanding here of what Jesus is laying out and what the centrality of the gospel message is.

There's a risk here of when we read this, this idea of getting repaid for what we've done and thinking, okay, I need to try harder. I need to do better. I need to go to church more, read my scripture more.

All the things that we think we need to do. But if we do that, again, we fall right back in to what Peter did. Thinking it from a man's perspective of I have to lift myself up by my own bootstraps and try harder and do better.

Not what Jesus is asking of us. It's not a work harder, try better at a gospel. It's not a gospel of works. You see, this gospel, this idea of getting repaid for what we have done, it points us directly back to Jesus and what He has done.

[27 : 35] You see, within Christianity, we often use these terms justification and sanctification. Justification, often referred to as just as if I never sinned, talks about the payment that Christ made on the cross once and for all for those that would believe in Him.

The payment of sin, it's done, it's over. It was paid 2,000 years ago. Sin has been paid for, our salvation is assured. We often think of that and say, God, thank you, you did that. But then we go to the other side of the coin and we look at sanctification.

And sanctification is the living out then of the gospel. Living in light of Christ, that's where the morality comes into. And yet we often think, God, you did the justification, let me now do the sanctification.

You did your part, let me do my part. That is a farce to the gospel. You see, justification and sanctification, it's never a God did this, I must do this.

All of it is God, you have done this. You see what Jesus is asking of His disciples, again, what does He say? He says, cling to me.

[28 : 44] And if we cling to Him, if we turn our minds on God, He is faithful then to transform us, to sanctify us, to bring about those good works that He's talking about here.

See, Jesus isn't telling His disciples, hey, you need to pick up your game. You need to do a little better. When Jesus comes and knocks on the door, the only thing we have, the only work that we do is we have the option to open that door and welcome it in or not.

But I think we often think that when Jesus knocks on the door, hold on God, let me go clean my house really quick. Let me get everything in order, let me get it right. If that's your mentality, you'll never get it clean.

You won't. When Jesus knocks and if you let Him in, He says, I'll come, I'll clean house. You commit to me, if you follow me, you turn your mind on me, He is faithful to transform us.

That's a promise. Cassius was a medieval theologian.

[29 : 52] And he said that the only good work that man can do is the beginnings of a good will towards God. I think it rings so true. It's not even just a good will towards God, it's the beginnings of it.

But the flicker of light and yet Christ does the rest. In order to understand this, we have to understand the reality of the burden of what Jesus did and the burden of our sin.

See, Jesus came to pay the price that only man could pay but only God could afford. Well, why is that? Sin has butted in infinite offense against God.

When you picture perfection, if there's any flaw in perfection, what happens? It's no longer perfect. God in his perfection cannot allow imperfection in sin to persist.

And yet God in being infinitely good and holy and righteous, what that means then is that any sin, no matter how small, a white lie, the stealing of a candy bar, all of those things, what that means then is that each of those sins is an infinite offense then against God.

[31 : 05] If God is infinitely good, anything negative against that is infinitely bad. And so what payment must be made? Well, not myself. I cannot pay for a single sin, not one.

So when Jesus here tells us that we will be judged according to our works, he's not expecting us to sanctify ourselves, to make ourselves good enough for him.

Please do not misunderstand that. What he demands of us is he says, if you come to me, you cling to me, I will make you righteous.

I will make you good. I will make you right. I will bring those works out in your life. Because we're told in Scripture, what is the mark of a believer, of a disciple of Jesus, that they bear fruit?

And we often think, well, I need to bear fruit, I need to do better, I need to do these things. But really what's happening here is Jesus says, if you're a follower of me, I will make you bear fruit. You are grafted in, and you will bear fruit.

[32 : 08] You see, the bearing of fruit or the good works is not what brings about salvation or sanctification, but rather it's a test. It's a diagnostic tool, it's a way for us to look and say diagnostically, okay, am I walking in the faith with Jesus?

Am I committed to Him? Because if I am, that's a promise. It's not if and or but. If you are a follower of Jesus, you will bear fruit.

In Jesus here in verse 28, he brings it all together. He brings this weighty message that he brought to his disciples of telling them that if you want to follow me, not only will I die, but you also have to bear your cross.

You will possibly have to forfeit your life here on earth for heavenly rewards. But here in verse 28, he starts with this word, he says truly. And any time we see this word truly, what that means for us is Jesus saying, hey, pay attention, this is really important.

Take your time here. And he says truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.

[33 : 21] You see Jesus here speaking specifically to his disciples, he tells them, at the end of all of this, you will see the Son of Man, you will see me coming into the kingdom.

And understand the weight of this, again, we have to go back. How did Peter understand the idea of the Messiah? He thought the Messiah would come and establish His kingdom. He thought he was on the way to Jerusalem for Jesus to overthrow the Roman government and set them up as all leaders.

You know what Jesus is telling you is, you have the right ideas about the kingdom. But again, you're looking at them from a very human perspective, your own desire about it.

And what he's telling them is that you will see the Son of Man coming into His kingdom. You will see that kingdom be established, but that kingdom is here and not yet.

You see when Jesus died and rose again, what's the very last thing that he told to his disciples in Matthew 28?

[34 : 24] He says, and truly I tell you, all authority in heaven and in earth have been given to me. Christ was victorious. And what we know is that Christ then ascended to the right hand of the Father to intercede on our behalf and to prepare us a home.

And so he's telling his disciples, take heart. You will quite literally see the beginnings of that, the here and not yet. Because here's the reality even for us today, is that we are still living in light of this truth.

The kingdom of God is here and now. And yet at the same time, it is not brought to its fulfillment. We are still looking forward to that kingdom that lies ahead.

Not only here, but the very last words in the Bible of Jesus, the very end of Revelation, what does he say? And truly I am coming soon.

I'm coming back. He's coming back for us. You see here, he's challenging these disciples. He's flipping the paradigm and saying, it's not the earth, it's not this life that needs to be our focus.

[35 : 38] But focus yourself on the kingdom of God. On what he has laid out before us. It's not a moralism.

It's not trying harder. It's not doing better. It's clinging to Jesus. And so if you're sitting in that seat and thinking, man, that's weighty. You should. There's a lot here in the demand of the gospel is very high.

And yet even though the demand is high, the requirement on our behalf is very little. It's trust. It's turning over. It's saying, God, you are the priority and I will live for you.

I choose you today over everything else. And again, for most of us here, the thing that we have to choose over is usually not death. It's usually not suffering or torture.

Again, for us, most of us here, it's those little things in our lives. As we just talked about those things themselves are just as deadly. We choose to prioritize those or choose to look at those from a

man's perspective.

[36 : 44] And so today I want to speak specifically to four people, four groups. Because again, I think as we sit here, there's maybe one of four categories that we can find each of ourselves standing in.

The first, maybe you are sitting there and saying, I am a disciple of Jesus. I am following him. I cling to him. And just as scripture commends you. So too do we commend you.

You are a testament to the church. But in that, my challenge to you today is as you look around this room, there are some of those, there are people here, a lot of people here I'd imagine, that are not in that place.

And again, when we look in Matthew 28, right, when Jesus says, all authority in heaven and earth, what follows on that? Go therefore and make disciples. And so my challenge to you is if you are walking with the Lord, and especially you older men and women that have been in the faith a little longer, there's a younger generation that is here in our church that needs discipleship.

Again, I work with the youth and the young adults and I know that there are many, if not all of them that can use discipleship.

[38 : 03] Right before this passage that we looked at. If you just go up, look in verse 15, what do we see? We see Jesus commending Peter. But then what does he tell Peter?

Verse 18, and I tell you, you are Peter. And on this rock, I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We are the church, not this building, but we as the body.

We are the church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. But part of that then as well is that we need to be the church to each other as well.

Disciple. And now that second group, maybe you're sitting there and you're saying, well, I made a commitment to Jesus.

Maybe a long time ago, but I've not been living in light of that. I've not clung to Jesus. I've prioritized other things in my life. I have a lot of other things to take rain and priority.

[39 : 07] Well, if that's where you're finding yourself, I have good news for you. The solution is simple. Cling to Christ. Again, what does that mean?

If you find that you are struggling with either sin in your life or again, prioritizing other things, anxiety and worry, lay him down before Jesus and ask him, God, help me to prioritize you.

God, help me to cling to you. God, if it was asked of me to bear my cross, to literally die for you, God, give me the strength to do that because on my own, I can't do it.

We can't. And here's the promise. He's faithful to do it. We do that. He's faithful to do the rest if we're sincere in that.

But in that as well, just as I encourage that prior group to disciple, I would also encourage you seek discipleship. If you're in a place in your life, you're saying, man, I know the Lord, but I'm not walking maybe super welcome, right? I got sin in my life.

[40 : 15] We have a body here that wants to walk with you and disciple you and raise you up. So if you find yourself a visitor, come talk to me. Come talk to our elders.

Because that's what the body is here to do. Our third group. Maybe you are sitting here and you're saying, you know what? I accepted Jesus a long time ago.

But all of this, all this work stuff, I don't buy it. Maybe you're pointing back to the most famous verse of the Bible, John 3.16, for God so loved the world, he gave his only begotten Son, said that he who believes shall never die, but have eternal life. Maybe you're saying, well, I believe.

So I'm going to go live my life how I want. You see, when Jesus died on the cross, it's like a limitless credit card, right? I can go and spend it however I want. I lived this way when I was younger.

I viewed Jesus in the gospel as a get out of jail free card. I grew up in a Christian household. So yeah, sure, I'll believe it. I'm going to go live how I want. But God, if you're true, I don't want to go to hell. So I'll believe in the gospel.

[41 : 24] I'll have intellectual ascent. You see, but what we're also told in Scripture is that even the demons believe, yet they shudder in fear.

You see, the gospel belief in Jesus is not mere intellectual ascent. It's not just mere intellectually saying, yes, I believe in you. That's not, that is not belief in Jesus.

You see, when we talk about belief, what we're talking about is the very theme for today, commitment. God will, I commit to you. Because the reality is, if you truly believe that Jesus is who he says he is, you cannot, you cannot.

You cannot persist in your old life. And so if you find yourself in that position today of saying, you know what, I've, I accepted the Lord in my heart, but I didn't really follow it. I didn't really mean it. It didn't really mean much to me.

Again, the good news is, is that the gospel is simple in that here and now, if you want to give your life to the Lord, you can. God, I am a sinner and I repent.

[42 : 40] And God, I believe that you are who you say are and I want to follow you. I want to cling to you. Again, you pursue that.

He's faithful to change us. Dietrich Bonhoeffer again, in that same book, he wrote on ideas of cheap grace versus costly grace.

And cheap grace really illustrates this camp, I think. This camp that says, hey, God, you already paid it all. I can do what I want. He says, the essence of grace, we suppose, is that the account has been paid in advance.

And because it has been paid, everything can be had for nothing. Since the cost was infinite, the possibilities of using and spending it are infinite. What would grace be if it were not cheap?

Cheap grace means the justification of sin without the justification of the sinner. Grace alone does everything they say, and so everything can remain as it was before. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship, grace without the cross, grace without Jesus Christ living in incarnate.

[43 : 51] Cheap grace is the grace that we bestow upon ourselves. Cheap grace is when we create an idea of God in our mind and we choose to worship that over the living in actual God.

When we do what Peter did and we say, God, I will define you. I will live my life. I will live for me, but not for you.

And on the other hand, Bonhoeffer then lays out costly grace. The grace of the gospel, the grace that we see here in this very passage that we are looking at today, and he says, costly grace is costly because it calls us to follow, and it is grace because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ.

It is costly because it costs a man his life, and it is grace because it gives a man the only true life. It is costly because it condemns sin, and grace because it justifies the sinner.

Above all, it is costly because it costs God the life of his son. Ye were bought at a price, and what has cost God much cannot be cheap for us.

[45 : 02] Above all, it is grace because God did not reckon his son to dear a price to pay for our life, but delivered himself up for us. Costly grace is the incarnation of God. It is Jesus Christ. That's the reality of the gospel.

That is the reality of the message here that Jesus is laying out for his disciples, both then and for now. That which costs God everything cannot be cheap for us.

But again, it's not moralism. It's not a try harder, not a do better. It's a commitment. Turn it over. It's simple. Turn over God. I trust you. I want to follow you on a walk with you.

You'll note here for every single group I'm laying out, the answer is truly the same. Can't bear the cross on our own.

And finally that last group, again, maybe you find yourself here and you're saying, I've never accepted the Lord into my heart. I've never committed to him. I've never walked with him.

[46 : 13] And maybe you're looking at this and saying, that's a lot. You're not wrong. That's a lot. But also Christ has done it. And he's fulfilled it and he does it in us.

And so if you're saying you want that again, it is simple. Confess your sin and believe. God, I'm a sinner and it's you that I want. It's you that I believe in. I want to bear my cross and I want to follow you.

I want to cling to you. And again, if you find yourself in that camp today, you can do it from your seat. But even in that, what I would encourage you, come talk to us. Come talk to me right after. Come talk to Josh.

Come talk to our elders. Really, most of the people here would love to walk that journey. We as a church want to walk that journey with you. Because again, what are we told? 27. You will repay each person according to what he has done.

If we cling to man, if we cling to this life, or if we cling to God. That's the reality. And so today I want to leave you with the words of Jesus.

[47 : 30] Verse 24, and then Jesus told his disciples, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

Follow Jesus. God, we come before you this morning, Lord. And God, you are faithful to do a work in us, Lord.

Lord, if we look at the world and we look at you through the perspective of man, God, I pray that you convict our hearts, God. Lord, we are thankful that your yoke is easy and your burden is light and that you have borne that cross.

So even when you call us to bear that cross, God, it is but joy, not a burden. God, do a work in us today.

Regardless of what camp we in, regardless of where we find ourselves, God, you know where we're at. And so God, I just pray for all of us here. Perform us with your word, Lord. Help us to cling to you.

[48 : 42] Help us even be aware, God, of areas where we're not. God, we give you ourselves.

And God, we look forward to your return. Amen.