

True Discipleship

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[0:00] This morning, all right, Children's Church, you may be dismissed. So, if during the sermon you have a question, just use one of the pastoral care cards in the pocket in front, at the back of the seat in front of you, and just write out the question that you might have.

We'll collect them at the end, and I'll do my best to try to answer them, if not this morning, certainly, to post the answers on the website. Well, please turn your Bibles to Matthew chapter 16, and this morning our attention will be directed to verses 24 through 27.

And the title of this sermon is True Discipleship, and it is the concluding sermon in a four-part sermon series on the Christian life that we began on the first Sunday of the year.

And this first sermon, the first sermon was titled True Religion, the second True Forgiveness, the third True Repentance, and now this concluding sermon, True Discipleship.

Matthew 16, beginning in verse 24. Then Jesus told his disciples, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take of his cross and follow me.

[2:01] 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? For 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.

Let's pray together. Father, we thank you that we are able to have your word, read your word, and to sit under the preaching of your word.

And we pause this morning looking to you, asking for your help. Lord, I need your help to proclaim your word. We all need your help to hear your word.

[3:12] And ultimately, Lord, to obey your word. Lord, as we conclude with this sermon on the Christian life and talk about true discipleship, will you speak to our hearts?

Speak to our hearts as a church. And Lord, speak to us individually. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

I want to begin this morning by asking a question. How do you identify yourself in relation to Jesus? How do you identify yourself in relation to Jesus? This morning on this island and across the Bahamas and many nations around the world, people are gathered or have gathered or will gather in churches doing what we are doing this morning.

And what was true in Jesus' day is also true in our day. Jesus is not merely interested in large crowds of people associating with him.

[4:40] Instead, he wants true disciples. Jesus was never impressed with large crowds because he saw them for what they were. Large crowds.

Large crowds that were following him for all kinds of reasons. Especially for miracles and especially when they needed them. When they needed to be healed or they needed to be fed.

And it is very instructive for us that at the end of the ministry of Jesus, despite the massive crowds that followed him when he walked this earth, on the day of Pentecost, only 120 persons could be found in the upper room in obedience to his command to wait for the promise of the Father.

And the reason that that crowd was not more representative of the numbers of people who flocked after Jesus when he walked on this earth is very simple.

Not everyone associated with Jesus is a true disciple of Jesus. In this passage of Scripture that we have just read, Jesus lays out clearly and soberly what is required of everyone who will follow him.

[6:16] And from what he says, here's what we can conclude from these words of Jesus. True disciples of Jesus surrender their lives to follow him.

True disciples of Jesus surrender their lives to follow him. And so in this passage, as it relates to following Jesus, Jesus lays out for us, number one, the terms, number two, the options, and number three, the outcomes, that we all need to consider who associate ourselves with Jesus. And so let's consider the terms following Jesus, first of all. Jesus lays out the terms for us in verse 24. He says, If anyone will come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. Now it's important to see that Jesus, although he was addressing his disciples, he was speaking universally. Notice what it says.

Then Jesus told his disciples. He's addressing them. But his words go beyond them. His words are universal words. He says, If anyone, the word anyone is a universal word.

[8:04] Now, in order for us to appreciate what Jesus is actually saying, we have to hear him in the context in which he was speaking.

And Matthew gives us the context. The context is that Peter had just recently identified Jesus as the Messiah, as the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And then starting in verse 21, it says, look at verse 21, it says, From that time. So Peter had just seen, you are the Messiah, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

And Matthew writes, 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. That shall never happen to you.

[9:12] 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.

This is the context in which Jesus utters these words about discipleship. Jesus, having been seen now by his disciples that he is the Messiah, begins to say to them, I'm going to suffer many things at the hands of the priests and the scribes, and I'm going to be killed.

And Peter says, No way. It will never happen to you. Peter was so confident that suffering and death that Jesus predicted for himself was inconsistent with who Jesus was and what his mission was that he had the tenacity, he had the audacity to contradict Jesus and say, It will never happen to you.

For Peter, suffering and death just should not be a part of what it means to be Messiah. But Peter's words reflected something broader, reflected a broader attitude, a broader philosophy that Jesus understood had implications for following him.

And that's the reason that Jesus proceeds to utter these words that we find in verses 24 through 27.

[11:08] Jesus wants to help Peter and us to see that suffering and death are not just part of Messiah's journey. suffering and death are a part of the journey of anyone who will follow him.

And in verse 24 he makes this clear by laying down the terms of following him. And the first term that he lays down is the term of self-denial.

He says, If you're going to be my follower, if you're going to come after me, you must deny yourself. this speaks to surrendering our lives. It speaks to surrendering the claim to our lives to be the master of our lives.

And we surrender it over to Jesus. You know, we're all born with a natural desire to preserve and promote ourselves and our interests in accordance with what we believe is best for us.

The smallest child knows how to share. The big part for me, the small part for you. We have that innate.

[12:26] We promote our self-interest. We promote what we think is best for us. But Jesus says, If you're going to be my disciple, if you're going to follow me, you must deny all that.

you must deny all that you lay claim to for yourself. And notice that this denial is not in a vacuum. Jesus is not saying that you just do this the way some people take vows of poverty or they take certain vows in life to lead a pious-looking life.

It's not just that. Later on, he tells us in verse 26 that it needs to be for his sake. that it's a conscious decision. It is a conscious attitude that we are denying self, that we are going against our instincts and our personal desires for the sake of Christ, for the sake of following him.

That's the only way to follow him in a true sense. And the second term that he lays out in verse 24 is we must take up our cross.

[13:35] He says you need to take up your cross. And this cross is not the person we work with who gets on our last nerve.

When Jesus spoke these words and he said you must take up your cross, the disciples knew what he was saying. They understood in that context what it means to take up a cross.

They had seen crucifixion throughout their lives. It was a regular occurrence where a person who was going to the place of crucifixion would carry his cross to that place of crucifixion.

They understood that Jesus was addressing the issues of suffering and death in a very symbolic way. That was the symbolism of the cross.

That is what the cross actually meant. Jesus was saying that those who would come after him must knowingly and willingly sign up for suffering and death.

[14:49] Now clearly Jesus is not saying that everyone who follows him will experience suffering and death in the exact same way that he did. He is not saying that.

On a primary level all who follow Jesus will experience some degree of suffering and we will die to self to some degree.

As a matter of fact I think it's safe to say to follow Jesus is to suffer a thousand times and die a thousand times. And it's clear that Jesus never had in mind that the picture was come and literally die the way I have died.

Luke helps us to see this. In Luke's account in Luke chapter nine what Luke says Jesus said and this is how we can appreciate the gospel accounts. You know sometimes in a conversation you hear a person say something and maybe two persons heard it and they are recounting what was said and then there's someone who remembers one word saying no no no he didn't say that.

He said very much not just much he very much and that one word just helps you to see that there's a greater accent on what was said. When Luke gives his investigated account of what Jesus said.

[16:24] Luke said in 923 Luke 923 Luke says Jesus said if you're going to come after me and be my disciple you must take up your cross daily.

Daily. Now clearly the implication is that you don't die literally physically once and for all the first time you pick up that cross. But the mere fact that he said you must pick up this cross daily indicates that it is a way of life of daily embracing this willingness to suffer this willingness to deny self and die to self in following the Lord Jesus.

It is something that we are called to do consciously every single day that we live on this earth and we follow the Lord. So clearly while physical suffering and death could be our portion in accordance with God's sovereignty and it has been some people's portion for most of us it relates more to an attitude of embracing suffering and embracing death to self in order to follow Jesus wherever he leads us and however he leads us.

And the willingness to suffer and die to self is made easier. The willingness to take up our cross daily is made easier after we have done the first thing Jesus said we must deny ourselves.

We must lay down those claims to our lives and being the master of our lives and what we want to do with our lives we lay it all down. It becomes easier to take up our cross daily after we have done that.

[18:22] And then third he says in verse 24 and follow me. And this third term means to follow and keep on following. To follow Jesus is not to check it out to see if you think it will work out whether you like it.

No. To follow Jesus is a commitment to start and never look back. It is a fixing of one's face to follow Jesus.

Jesus wherever and whenever and for however long he would have us on this earth. Not disassociating with him but committing our lives to follow him for all the days of our life.

We are going to follow Jesus in life and in mission however he leads us wherever he leads us. So following Jesus is a surrender of our whole life.

every aspect of our lives. No part of it is exempt. As I look around this room this morning I see husbands and wives and fathers and mothers and business owners and employees children and students neighbors and co-workers accomplishments and aspirations and I'm reminded that our lives have multiple parts to them.

[19:56] Following Jesus means that we lay it all down. Following Jesus that we take everything that we are aware that our life consists of and we surrender it to him.

we lay it down knowingly and willingly and we accept what he would have for us.

We choose to in a sense what the apostle Paul says I consider it all loss. We surrender not just what we have we surrender who we are to Jesus.

and when we do this in accordance with the way that Jesus is saying here that we must do this we must engage in this self-denial this taking up of a cross and following him.

We really give up all claims to any right that we would normally claim to have.

[21:05] we lay it down before him. And we remember that we don't get to choose what God does with our lives once we do that.

We just simply follow and we simply trust him with our lives. And when we consider these words of Jesus we realize real quick that following Jesus is more than leading a good moral life.

It is more than stopping particular sins and embracing acts of righteousness and virtues. It certainly includes that.

Leading a good moral life does not make us a follower of Christ. You can find Muslims who do some of the same good moral things. Leading a good moral life is certainly inclusive of what it means to lay our lives down because the Lord would have us to do that.

That's a part of it. That's not the whole of it. He calls us to lay down our lives our whole life before him.

[22:23] I believe that we need to think about that. we need to think about this statement of Jesus if anyone would come after me let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

This whole life wholehearted laying down to follow Jesus. We need to consider what that looks like for us in our own lives.

Jesus invites whosoever will to come and follow him based on those terms. And see Jesus is not like us. Jesus doesn't kind of like say well you know I'll take whatever you give me.

He says no these are the terms to follow me. In verses 25 and 26 Jesus discusses the options of following him or not following him.

Let's consider those options. Look at what he says in verse 25. He says for whoever will save his life will lose it but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.

[23:43] Here's the honest truth and I think we can all agree with this. We've lived long enough to know this. Fully surrendering our whole life to Jesus is not easy. And here's a hint.

Anyone who tells you it's easy you can draw one of two conclusions. One they're lying. Two they haven't surrendered. They don't know what to surrender. They think surrendering your life means some cakewalk and it's not that.

They have not understood what the words of Jesus are about laying down your whole life.

Surrendering our whole life to Jesus consistent with these words of Jesus is not easy.

And if it was easy more people would do it. It is unnatural to surrender and relinquish control over our lives. Our natural inclination is not to surrender to Jesus.

We want to hold on to our lives. We want to preserve our lives. And that's the very first option that Jesus addresses. He says whoever would save his life will lose it.

[25:00] Jesus is saying that what we try to preserve, we're going to lose. We try to keep, we try to preserve things because we don't want to follow Jesus.

And Jesus says, you know what, you're going to lose. will attain the life that you think you will attain by holding on to your life and refusing to lay it down and to trust me with it.

He's basically saying it's not going to work out. In the end, you won't be satisfied. You realize that the life you desired, you did not attain.

And you know what, it doesn't mean that you won't achieve your goals. You may achieve every single goal that you set out to achieve. You may, you may not.

But even if you did, Jesus says in the end, it's going to be a total loss. You will come to your conclusion that it amounts to nothing. Away from a surrendered life to Jesus.

[26:16] brothers and sisters, this is the universal bottom line for all those who choose not to follow Jesus because they count their lives too precious to lay it down in order to follow him.

Universally, Jesus says, notice verse 26, for whoever will save his life will lose it. Whoever, whoever thinks his life is just too much, too precious, he can't trust Jesus with it.

So he holds on to it himself. Jesus says, you're going to lose it. The unvarnished truth is that whatever hinders us from fully following Christ, whatever we hold on to will turn out to be a loss. things. But notice the other option. Jesus gives it in the latter part of verse 24.

He says, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. Jesus says, when we lose our life to follow him, in other words, we treat it as a loss, he says, we'll find it through following him.

[27:42] In life, the real winners are the losers, as relates to following Jesus or not. Those who surrender, claim over their life, and follow Jesus.

They're the ones who truly win. They don't lose. Anyone who's followed Christ for any reasonable period of time, if you've truly followed Christ for any reasonable period of time, you'll experience loss.

And even for some, the loss comes very early. And we realize that there's a cost to follow Christ. We realize, some of us, immediately, we lost friends.

some friends walked away from us when they found that we came to Christ, or we, in good conscience, convicted by the Spirit, knew that there were some friends that we had to part ways with.

As I prepared this sermon, I recalled the experience of a lady that I know. She was engaged to be married, and during the period of the engagement, she came to Christ.

[29:12] And she learned from Scripture that she should not marry an unbeliever. her husband to be was an unbeliever.

And there was a hard decision that she wrestled with in the end. She concluded the engagement. She surrendered that part of her life to Christ.

She lost it. I thought of a businessman owned a small business, business.

He closed it because in order to compete, in order to survive in that business, he needed to falsify invoices to compete with the other participants in that particular industry to be able to survive.

Couldn't do it without falsifying the invoice because that's what everybody else was doing. And to follow Christ in that area of his life, to lay that area of his life down for Christ meant to lose it.

[30:25] to other testimonies over the years of individuals who have chosen to forego job promotions and relocations that involved significant increases in salary.

And they opted not to take those opportunities because of the implications they had for their service and participation in their local churches.

They chose to suffer loss for the sake of Christ. But Jesus says they will find what they've lost for his sake.

Now the meaning of this is broad and varied and we don't want to read into what Jesus is saying here. We want to take it just at plain value.

the reality is this. In the normal flow of life we all experience the same things.

[31:33] We experience losses, believers and unbelievers. And so it is not to say that following Jesus, everything that we lose, that somehow we will get a bigger and a better and a more.

not saying that at all. He doesn't promise that. That may be the case for some. And that has been the case for some.

But the Lord does not promise that that will be the case for all of us. For some of us it may mean even though we have suffered a tangible loss, we know and we enjoy things that money can't buy like peace with God and the peace of God and having peace of mind.

And then we also know that when this life passes away we have something that is far better and that is enduring. Something Jesus addresses in verse 27.

In verse 26 Jesus asks two sobering questions. these questions help us to see that the hindrances to laying our lives down to follow Jesus relate to this world and what this world offers.

[32:59] Money and possessions, pleasures and comforts, accomplishments and accolades, and so much more. To understand what Jesus is saying we need to bear in mind what he says.

in verse 26 is connected to what he said in verse 25. To really appreciate what Jesus is saying in verse 26 we have to recognize it is not a new thought.

It is a connected thought to what he said earlier. If you have an ESV Bible you'd probably notice a note 6 in verse 25 to the word life.

and what you would find is that the footnote in the bottom says that the Greek word can mean either soul or life.

So what we have is in verse 25 that same word in the original is translated life but in verse 26 it is translated soul.

[34:13] but it's the same word in the original. Jesus is continuing the same thought. And what Jesus helps us to see this is what we see in verse 26.

Jesus helps us to see that what is at stake in a decision to accept the terms of following him or reject the terms of following him is our very soul.

soul. It's our very soul that is at stake. And to the person who rejects following Christ because he wants to hold on to his life in this world, Jesus says, what would it profit you if you gain the whole world and lose your soul?

soul? And then he says, and when you have lost your soul, how can you possibly get it back?

That's the second question he asks in verse 26.

What will you give in return for your soul? Some translations say in exchange for your soul. people? And these questions, Jesus is pointing to the fact that our decision to follow him or not has eternal consequences.

[35:31] And yet, so many people only think about this life. And Jesus helps us to see that these decisions involve our very souls.

I wonder this morning, how have you thought through the options of following Jesus? Have you surrendered your life to him, trusting him to have his way, to have his will with you?

In other words, have you willingly laid your life down even as you continue to live it? Even as you continue to be a husband or be a wife, to own a business or be an employee, to have your possessions, to have every single part of your life that pertains to your life, but they're all submitted to Jesus as you live life in this world.

And see, that is what it is. When we lay our lives down for Jesus, when we truly deny ourselves and arm our minds with this attitude of dying and being willing to suffer for the cause and the sake of Christ and choosing to follow him, our lives would abruptly change where we cease to be married and we cease to have possessions and we cease to have accomplishments, no, they're still the same.

But we relate to those things differently when we truly have laid them before Jesus. We hold them more loosely. We have a different attitude even towards how people treat us and how we think about our rights.

[37:34] And you know, one of the things I'm coming to learn, that the Lord may, as it pertains to some of my rights, I can't just, because I have a right, immediately enforce that right without considering what the Lord would have me to do with that.

If my life is truly submitted to him and laid down for him, I have to consider, Lord, what would you have me to do? Because he may have me to suffer the loss or the abuse in that situation.

Whereas for you, he may tell you to do something completely different. As I was thinking about this, I could not help think about the falsity of the health and wealth gospel that tells people that to follow Jesus is to have more added to you and to guarantee you a particular outcome of blessing and abundance.

that is so foreign and so contrary to these words of Jesus. Any honest reading of these words of Jesus would not have a hint that laying our lives down is some promise of gain or abundance. It is quite, quite the opposite. It is only when we look closer and we hear the fuller words of Jesus that we can say in the grand scheme of things, we are guaranteed to gain, we are guaranteed to be on the winning side of the equation.

[39:19] finally, Jesus addresses the outcomes. I find a point, the outcomes. Look at verse 27.

Jesus says, here's what I want you to see, notice from verse 25 how Jesus is connecting these thoughts for whoever. Verse 25.

For what? verse 26. And now in verse 27. For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father that he will repay each person according to what he has done.

Jesus tells us that what's happening in the here and now is not the final analysis. He tells us there's something beyond these decisions that we make.

Jesus tells us that choosing to follow or not follow him as one of his disciples does not end in our decision. That's not the last word. He has the last word.

[40:35] He says he will issue a verdict on the day when he comes with his angels in the glory of his father. And see when you think about this right now for a lot of people and often times we hear them say they say oh Christianity that's for weak people you need a crutch and they look down upon us and they mock us and they scorn us and to some extent I think we can see the implications of the words of Jesus in verse 27 when he says the son of man is going to come with his angels and the glory of his father this is something grand and something majestic and it is an amazing contrast to what we see right now this company of people who would lay down their lives for Jesus this company of people who would seem to the world and in the world's view worth nothing and they would dismiss and discount

Jesus says no there's coming a day when I'm going to have the last word on all of that he tells us he is going to issue a verdict he's going to issue a judgment he's going to repay each person according to what he has done clearly what is in view is the day of judgment Christ is going to issue the final verdict of our lives over our lives concerning our lives and what is clear is that the outcome is not going to be the same for everyone Jesus says he will repay each person according to what he has done about this day of judgment here's what John Calvin wrote he wrote for if we would perceive the worthlessness of this fading life we must be deeply affected by the view of the heavenly life if we're going to perceive the worthlessness of this fading life we must be deeply affected by the view of the heavenly life the heavenly life that is so true but how easy it is for us to be engrossed in this life so engrossed that we don't even take the time to think about the heavenly life and the fact that one day

Jesus is going to repay everyone according to what he has done and here we should not think that this is even a hint of works salvation that Jesus is going to reward us because we chose him he's going to reward us because of the work we did in coming to him I think it is best for us to simply understand what Jesus is saying that in the end he will be the final judge of those who surrender their lives to follow him and those who do not it's the simplest way to understand what Jesus is saying it will be lost for those who preserve their lives it will be lost for those who refuse to lay down their whole life for Jesus and it will be gain for those who did

I don't know about you but I find these words to be sobering words because these aren't really words spoken to the world and to unbelievers these were words spoken to his disciples and Luke also says those who were in the crowd those who were around Jesus how do we hear these words this morning not all who associate with Christ are true disciples of Christ Christ if you're here this morning and you are reluctant or just outrightly unwilling to surrender your whole life to Jesus or to surrender some part of your life to Jesus some aspect that you just want to hold on to and I think we all struggle in different ways with different aspects!

of that some parts of our lives are easier to lay down than others but we're struggling with any aspect of that encourage us to ask the Lord to open our eyes to the beauty and the value of Christ because I think that's what it is when we don't see Christ as he is for who he is his beauty his majesty his value then we are tempted and minded to hold on to our lives and not lay them down to

follow him because we don't see him as beautiful we don't see him as valuable and for those of us who to the best of our abilities we have laid down our lives to follow Christ we are not conscious of any particular aspect that we are holding on to we think it's so precious to lay down if we find ourselves there this morning

[46:27] God has been merciful to open our eyes God has been merciful to enable us to see the beauty of Christ the value of Christ he's also opened our eyes to see the!

worthlessness of this life the fleetingness of this life that we would just lay our lives down and say Lord your way is the better way we don't do that by intelligence we don't do that by moral goodness we do that because God has been merciful in Matthew 13 Jesus tells a parable about a merchant who is in search of fine pearls and when he found one of great price he went and sold everything that he had and came back and he purchased that pearl he was looking for fine pearls so the pearl of great price was willing to sell everything and he bought that you know in our own way all of us every single human being is going through life and their own wisdom we're all looking for pearls we're all looking for that ultimate because of the way we are made we are looking for what we think will make the best life and sometimes you know we second guess the decisions that people make and we second guess them because we are seeing life from our vantage point but really from their vantage point they're going after pearls as well as best they can see them and for those of us who have seen the pearl of greatest price in

Jesus Christ that's because God has enabled us to see that God has enabled us to see the value of Christ the beauty of Christ that we are willing to lay our lives down for him I know the beauty in that is this if something is valuable enough for us to sell all of our assets to buy it when we acquire whatever we get we've really gotten our lives again it's wrapped up in the value and it's in Christ that we find our true lives it is in Christ that we find the true value of our lives it is in Christ that we truly find all that we have given up that is worthwhile and truly we lose nothing when we find ourselves in

Christ true disciples surrender their lives to follow Jesus before we pray this morning I want to just right where we are let's pause and really consider these words this morning these words of Jesus about the terms of following him about the options that we have and then the outcomes that will come to us based on whether we are true disciples and lay our lives down or whether we hold on to our lives and we do our own thing with them believing that that is what the Lord requires

God let not our consciences condemn us this morning Father help us to not have any awareness in our minds of some part of our lives that we are refusing to lay at the feet of Jesus and then follow him trusting him to do with it whatever he chooses and Lord for those who have not for the first time laid down their lives to follow Jesus would you open their eyes help them Lord to see the worthlessness and the emptiness of this world that so many people are losing their souls for and help them to see the beauty the knowledge to see and the value of the pearl of greatest price the [51:50] Lord Jesus Christ Father do the work in our hearts that only you can do through the power of your spirit we pray in Jesus name Amen Are there any questions on anything that may have come to mind during the sermon thank you sir by the way this is Tim Seeley's mom and dad father and mother

God said you answered that yeah that's a very good question and I think what it points to is a reminder that we who have trusted in Christ are in union with Christ and to truly be in union with Christ is to embrace both the suffering the suffering Christ and all the other blessings that we perceive that come to us through Jesus Christ and I think this is where we fall short and here is the first part of the answer to your question I really believe that the primary way that we begin to live that out is to truly embrace that we consciously do not I would I would venture to say embrace the suffering

Christ it's contrary to our nature we don't want to suffer if we could write the script for our lives it would not include suffering and so I really think that the foundation for what Paul lays out here always bearing in our bodies the death of the Lord is to arm ourselves with that attitude Lord Jesus you are my savior I embrace you in both your living and your dying and your suffering we embrace it as an attitude and see when I embrace!

I need to die to self and give over my rights it's more natural for me to do that once I've already done that so I think arming ourselves with this attitude and then living moment by moment trusting

the Lord to help us to being informed with this attitude to respond as we should with our rights with our possessions with our ambitions with everything that's a very good very good question and really opens another part of this truth about what it means to lay our lives down to follow Jesus because sometimes we could think about just this rote I've laid it down I'm following Jesus but no we're in union with him and we are embracing him in all that he is and part of who he is is suffering and suffering comes to us in all different shapes and sizes very good question thanks for asking that any other questions

Troy question I wanted to ask was how important is a verse like this in presenting the gospel I know when we talk to people and we're evangelizing I think we tend to want to paint a pretty picture so it's almost a comment question but how important is it to let people know that's a very good question I would say this verse is more suited in what I would call relational evangelism where you have time to you're coming alongside a person and you are helping them to see what it means to follow Jesus Christ I don't believe that this is what we need to grab a hold of let's say for example you meet someone and the

[56:53] Lord impresses upon your heart to share the gospel with them I wouldn't start here I would share the good news about every single person being a sinner having fallen short of the glory of God God being merciful and not giving us what we deserve but sending a son to die in our face I would share a classic gospel presentation with someone on the floor but in terms of helping people to understand that we have that relationship the ongoing opportunity or even for somebody who comes and says you know I want to accept Christ I think it is wise to lay out for them what it means to follow Jesus Christ one of the things I thought about as I was preparing this sermon I thought about a few months ago I purchased something on Amazon I didn't need to say that that's what I purchased if it's online it's from

Amazon and the item came and it was damaged I bought it from a third party seller over Amazon and it was only after it was damaged I went and I read the fine print about return for that seller and the fine print was not in my favor and I was on the phone for hours pleading with Amazon to because I'm a good customer to let me slide and they did in the end they did let me slide on that but my point is it is it is sad when a person who was committed to follow Jesus Christ finds the fine print later on when they meet with the realities of what it means to follow

Jesus and see Jesus didn't do that Jesus told the disciples he says listen this is what it means to follow me and so while I wouldn't start there I think Troy this is certainly not this is a passage I think we need to keep it in our minds even as we proclaim the gospel because what we don't want to do is we don't want to get what I would call fraudulent converts where we make them to think following Jesus is something other than what it really is is that helpful okay so I just want to clarify so to Troy's question I just want to understand were you asking if it should be a part of the presentation of the gospel I just want to clarify so for example and this is where you can answer this question as you're laying out the gospel and you come to the areas of repentance and faith specifically and you are laying out before them the demands of what repentance and faith contains or includes would you be suggesting that as a part of what repentance and faith looks like that you would weave into some aspect that the life of a true believer is going to be someone who is denying themselves taking the cross and following him so

I just want to hear clarification on that point yeah I think again I would say ideally yes but it would vary from person to person setting in terms of my own impressions in terms of what I see in terms of maybe knowing that person so yes I mean ideally I would say yes you want to make sure that you're not selling a fraudulent gospel where it's like you say it's A and then when they sign up they realize it's the rest of the alphabet as well is that what you are yeah that's helpful yeah and I could think over the years in my own experience it's just varied based on circumstances relationship time that you have with that individual because one of the things we should really think about as well is that we don't just have there's some people a one time and that's it and I'm done telling you about

Christ sometimes people make a commitment or they come to you and they say well I prayed this prayer and we can begin to tease out for them what it really means to follow Jesus Christ I think more and more what we are learning as we study scripture is that for most of us we tend to think of

following Christ in terms of a decision which is what we don't largely see in scripture what we see in scripture is a call to follow Jesus a call to discipleship and so while that may begin with a decision the decision certainly is not the end of it anybody else before we sing our closing song ok