

Core Values: Transformational Discipleship - Luke 9:23-27

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Preacher: Eric Morse

- [0 : 00] Luke 9, 23 through 27. And he said to all, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me.
- For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?
- For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.
- But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God. Amen. Amen. Thank you guys so much for being here this morning, this balmy, if I may, winter morning.
- I'm excited for spring. It's been a long winter and we've had some recent snow, as you guys know. But with the promise of spring comes the promise of new growth and resurrection life. So I want to encourage us to be looking forward, even now in the month of February, for Resurrection Sunday.
- [1 : 10] We're excited about our upcoming series after the Core Value series where we're going to work through four weeks preparing for Resurrection Sunday. And the Good Friday, or excuse me, death of Jesus Christ on the cross.
- We're excited to anticipate together Jesus and his perfect gospel work. This morning we get to be in Luke 9 and we're going to continue our series through the core values of our church.
- We've already worked through Beholding Jesus. We've worked through Christ-centered teaching and now we get to work through number three, transformational discipleship. And what our core values really are as a church is they guide what we believe and what we practice as a church body.
- The things that we are going to be about as a family of God in this church. These are what we see scripture to be pointing to that the church should embody. And number three, we have transformational discipleship today.
- So I'd love to read just our blurb on transformational discipleship and then we'll work through our text together. But if you put that up on the screen, let's read. I'm going to read it out loud and you can follow along as you watch.
- [2 : 19] We believe that all followers of Jesus are called to grow in faith and in holiness through the daily practice of dying to self and submitting to Jesus as Lord and all things.
- In response to the grace of the gospel, disciples faithfully learn to obey Jesus' commands, abide in his word, bear fruit, deny the flesh, pursue selflessness, and help others follow Jesus in the context of the local church.
- We believe disciples are progressively being transformed into the likeness of Christ in heart, soul, and mind by the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit.

If you were to go on our website and look up our core values, which you can do at any time, you would find that under this blurb, we have a bevy of verses.

Meaning that transformational discipleship is a theme that runs all through scripture. But specifically, the text that I've chosen to preach on this, of all of those texts, is a very, very controversial text.

[3 : 27] Not controversial in the church. Not controversial for you and me. But for the average person in this world who may hear the words that we will study this morning.

This is a deeply controversial text. I remember about four years ago now that I had the privilege of leading a young adult's ministry at our former church, Fourth Memorial.

And we got to go up to Riverview Bible Camp in the context of this beautiful wilderness retreat. And all of the young adults, there's about 30 in total, young people passionate about the Lord, wanting to get away and meet with God.

And I'll never forget, the preacher goes up and pulls out this very text, Luke 9.

And the theme that year was specifically on giving up everything in order to follow Jesus and observe the cost of discipleship. And as the preacher began to speak on Luke 9, 23 to 27, I knew right away that this was going to lead to some serious conversations, of which I was grateful for.

[4 : 40] And soon after the sermon was over, we finished and we went into a time of breakout discussion. And over the next roughly seven hours from about 7 p.m. till about 2 in the morning, I engaged in a number of conversations with some young people that were deeply moved by this text.

And they had this passion that was all of a sudden new, this fire, that if Jesus is saying these things, I need to respond, I need to respond now, and I need to do something now in my life.

But how do I do that? Those are the nature of the conversations that I was having with all these young adults. And the reason why that happened, all of the Bible affects us when we read it, but specifically there are a lot of texts where Jesus will say something.

That is controversial. And when we engage with these texts, they're like radioactive isotopes. They affect us when we're around them, and they get into our system, except for instead of leading to something that we don't want, which is poisoning and death, Jesus gets into us.

We look at his words, and it affects us in a positive way. And so that's what this text is really about, Luke 9, 23 to 27. Let's read it once more together and be ready for what the Lord is going to do in our heart this morning.

[6 : 08] And he said to all, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in glory, in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God. Let me pray for us once more. Lord, thank you for this text.

I thank you that your word oftentimes pulls us out of our comfort zones, that it presses into the areas of our life where we may have been complacent, or we need a refreshing of your truth and the reality of following Jesus in this life.

Thank you for this text this morning, Lord, and I pray that each and every one of us would be transformed into the image of Jesus Christ as a result of your word being preached, but also as a result of carrying out and obeying the things we see this morning.

- [7 : 17] In your name we pray. Amen. All right, Luke 9, context. Well, we're in a gospel that's all about the Son of God being the Son of Man, Jesus Christ.
- And in this gospel, Jesus says a lot of really tough, again, tough in the sense, if you don't already follow Jesus, these are hard words. A lot of hard sayings come out of Luke.
- And in this passage, we see him speaking to a specific group of people. I want us to notice right off the bat here in verse 23, it says this, And he said to all.
- And that focus is unique to Luke's gospel. The other synoptic gospels have an account of this very phrase, this command to deny yourself, pick up your cross. But Luke's gospel has a few specific flavors.
- And first, he said to all. But if you look immediately preceding this passage, Jesus was just talking to a specific group of people, namely the disciples.
- [8 : 18] Strictly charging his disciples to not tell everyone about what he just told them regarding his death. And now it shifts. And in verse 23, you see this, He said to all.
- The importance of this phrase is that Jesus is giving a universal call. Any person in this room, any person who may somehow stumble upon this message if it gets posted online later, any person who reads this text on their own in any other country, culture, context, time, place, here's what Jesus is saying.
- What I'm about to offer you, listener, hearer, is something that will change everything about your life. For the self-righteous and for the unworthy, this call is the same.
- For the religious and the godless, this call is the same. For the faithful and the unfaithful, the call is the same. For the joyful and the broken, the call is the same. For the sinner and the saint, the call is the same.
- And you, whoever you are, wherever you are, will receive a call from Jesus today in His text. That's what the opening lines tell us. So let's dive into verse 23.
- [9 : 37] This is the real meat of His message. And it's short but sweet. And here's what He says. Anyone that wants to follow Me, be My disciple, walk in My ways, claim allegiance to Me.
- That's what that means when He says, come after Me. Here's the three things that they must do. And these are all verbs. They're imperatives, commands. Deny Himself, take up His cross daily, and follow Me.
- Now with these three commands, as we look into them a little bit deeper, I want to be clear about what Jesus is doing here. The nature of this discipleship call, this entire section, is three things.
- I may all start with E because I'm a pastor and I like to alliterate. So three E's. This is what Jesus is doing here. The call of discipleship in this passage is first explicit. It's specific and clear.
- Many times Jesus will preach or teach in a way that's a little obscure, a little mysterious, in order to draw people into the conversation, in order to get them to ponder and think. And He's certainly wanting you to think about the call.
- [10 : 43] But in this text, Jesus is being extremely clear. Every person that would have heard the call we're about to read would have known what He's asking.
- Second, it's essential, meaning nothing is lacking. This is one of those texts where Jesus lays everything out. To obey the commands that He's about to give covers the whole of being a disciple.
- And then third, it's exclusive, meaning it's all or nothing. There is no lukewarm with God. There is no fence-sitting with God. And so with Jesus.

This text is about saying yes or no. No other option. And if you say yes, you are part of an exclusive group that has agreed to do the same. So let's talk through the three sort of commands or necessities of being a disciple.

First, Jesus says this, deny yourself. We're talking about discipleship this morning. At the heart of discipleship, at the very crux, the first step into becoming a disciple is denying ourselves.

[11 : 48] This command Jesus gives means that we reject selfishness. It means that we reject carnal pleasures. It means we reject evil desires. It means we reject self-indulgence.

We reject all things that serve ourselves over others. But at its core, what does denial of self really mean? As Jesus intended, denying yourself is to kill the prideful heart that lives within each one of us.

To deny the will to live according to your own standard. To pursue the things that I deem is good or godly or right that I deem.

Denying myself says, I reject my own standards. I reject my own ways of going about perceiving and achieving that which I think is good for me in life.

It's the full denial, mentally, even physically, of the things that I would choose to do. Denying ourself and our fleshly sinful will. Turning from our impossible attempts to be enough.

[13 : 04] Turning away from our failure, even, it's a part of denying oneself. Turning away from our dark hearts and refusing to put one more ounce of trust in them. That is denial of ourself.

That's step number one. According to Jesus, you want to be a disciple. You want to follow after me. The first immediate step, deny yourself.

But then he goes on to list number two. And number two is one that we need to take a little bit extra time to make sure we understand fully what Jesus is asking.

Number two is take up the cross. When Jesus says, take up the cross, I want us to note immediately here that what Jesus is not necessarily asking or commanding even is that we carry our cross.

It is implied. But the command itself is what? Pick up your cross. It's appealing to a decision that you and I need to make every single day.

[14 : 12] In other words, we ought not wake up, Christians, and assume that the cross is on our back. It's almost as if Jesus is saying, every moment of your life, are you carrying it or are you not?

And if you're not, pick it up. In fact, the first thing you do is you wake up in the morning, pick up the cross. Don't assume it's on your back already. How do we know that?

Because he says this special word that's really unique to Luke's gospel. Luke puts this in here. Daily. Daily. Day by day is another way to translate that.

Every day that you wake up, pick up the cross. That is the second call of discipleship that follows denial of self. But we are unable to pick up the cross until we've denied ourself.

And we'll talk about that more in a minute. But I want to talk quickly about the cross in modern culture. because texts like these and commands like these to pick up a cross, get trivialized, and get watered down if we don't understand fully the context by which Jesus was speaking this.

[15 : 18] So I believe that we have possibly been guilty today in this country of trivializing the cross. Let me give some examples. The cross is one of the most heavily produced jewelry items today by a long shot.

Wearing jewelry crosses today can be a cheap way to signal to others that you are spiritual or you are virtuous. And for many, this all comes with the complete ignorance of what the cross actually means and symbolizes.

Now, if you own a cross necklace, earring or else, and you're wearing it right now, I do not want you to feel condemned. But here's what I do want you to do. Wear your cross. Wear it.

There's nothing wrong with wearing a cross. But I encourage us to recognize what we are declaring when we wear a cross. Second, there's another way that we've potentially trivialized the cross in our modern culture.

How about this phrase? It's just my cross to bear. What do we mean when we use that phrase? I've used this phrase. Well, when something comes up that's an inconvenience in my life, maybe I got sick or maybe something happened or maybe I fell down the side of my house and hit my head on a rock like a knucklehead.

[16 : 29] After things come up that are inconvenient in life, oftentimes we can use phrases like this. Well, it's just my cross to bear. But unknowingly what we're doing is we're actually taking the cross and removing the weight of the symbol.

With phrases like this, we equate ancient torture and death with inconvenience. And then number three is another example, the term excruciating. This one's a little better at least because at least there's a recognition that pain is associated with the cross.

That's good. But I've actually essentially stripped this word from my vocabulary after learning the following fact. The word excruciate literally means out from the cross.

Ex, out of, and cruce, cross. Literally, the word excruciating means pain that's from the cross. Now this one might be a little smaller.

If you use the word excruciate, are you committing a carnal sin? No. But I do want to encourage us, the next time you stub your toe, consider using another word to describe your pain because any, few of us will ever experience anything close to the pain that Jesus and others felt by being crucified.

[17 : 43] In terms of the most controversial words that Jesus ever spoke, this statement in Luke, to deny yourself and to pick up your cross, might be number one. Let's set the context of the world in which he was speaking this to all who are listening.

In Roman world, in the culture and empire of Rome, he's speaking to a group of people who, unlike us, had a visceral, real, actual, raw connection to a Roman cross.

A cross that carries the message of brutality and death for all. A cross, the chosen weapon of torture and execution by Roman emperors for hundreds and hundreds of years.

There are accounts of people like Spartacus being crucified along with 6,000 of his followers all along the main road into Rome. That as people would come into Rome on the main road with their children, with their families, they would go through an ugly, disgusting display of thousands of people lined up dying a brutal death on a cross.

That is the association that Jesus just used. And here's what he says to the group. You need to pick up that ancient torture device that kills you and carry it.

[19 : 10] Do we understand what I'm asking now? This would have been one of those drop-dead silent moments in the sermon. One commentator even records that there are actually no historical records of crucified individuals ever living through the ordeal.

In other words, Jesus' association with the Roman cross can only mean one thing, death. True death. And that's what Jesus was counting on with this object lesson.

Just as he accused Roman prisoners, just as the accused Roman prisoners would carry their cross beam from the place of their trial to the place of their death, so too, here's what the disciple is called to do.

Carry your cross every day as a reminder that you have died and your life is now hidden with Christ. Jesus says, commit daily to the death of yourself.

Then, and only then, can you follow me and be my disciple. This is the death of our identity so that Jesus can form our new identity.

[20 : 13] identity. Now, I remember when I was a kid, I used to take pottery classes with my brothers and sisters and we'd go in and they would give us the spinning wheel with the clay on top and they would let us form anything we wanted and we would form and we would form and oh, I made a pot, I made a cup.

Maybe some of you have engaged in pottery. But think of it this way. What does it mean to deny myself and to pick up my cross? Think of it this way.

We are all forming and shaping the life we want and the life we think will lead to happiness, joy, satisfaction, you name it. And we're sitting at that wheel over a lifetime and we're spinning and we're shaping and we're forming something that we think is going to be perfect.

This passage is literally calling you regardless of where this may find you. If you are 15, you've been shaping that pot for 15 years. Maybe you're in here and you're 60. You've been shaping your pot for 60 years.

This is my whole life. Here's what this passage is calling you to do. To take that lifelong project and throw it into the fire. It's gone. I'm repenting of all of it for I know that it will equate to nothing.

[21 : 25] Once you've thrown that away and surrendered over, I have given my life up. I've given away the evil and the sin and the brokenness and the fallenness of my heart and my mind, of my goals with life, the things that I've sought to make me happy and bring joy, they're all gone and they're in the fire.

Once we've done that, here's what the promise is. Jesus is going to start forming a beautiful, perfect life in you and through you and for you. And it's all because of his work on the cross.

Which leads to number three. Deny yourself. Take up your cross. And the number three, the big one, follow me. In other words, Jesus is saying, I want you to, after denying yourself, dying to yourself, I want you to start taking steps behind me, alongside me.

And following Jesus essentially means that we go where he is going, to Calvary. Jesus hadn't died yet.

So he's looking to the disciples and saying this, kill your sin, kill your selfish heart and your pride, embrace an instrument of death every day, and then finally, walk behind me and follow me.

[22 : 48] And in our culture and context today, way removed, thousands of years beyond the cross, we can read follow me and we can immediately say, okay, Jesus is my Lord, he's my Savior, and we walk with him every day.

And that's true and good. But the moment that he said this to the disciples, Jesus had not gone to the cross yet. So he was asking the disciples, anyone that would say, yes, Lord, I will follow you, he was asking them in the moment to follow me even unto my own death.

In other words, identify with Jesus. Even unto death. Thousands upon thousands of people have chosen, hundreds of thousands, millions of Christians have chosen to die to self and to follow Jesus, receiving new life through the gospel, but those millions of people have also, after choosing that first life with Christ and that first death to self, they've also chosen literal physical death in following Jesus.

And I'm talking about the martyrs of our faith. People who have said, I will step by step walk with you, Jesus, and if it does lead to my death on this earth, that's okay because it led to your death.

Is Jesus literally asking you to die and be willing to die in this text? Well, it's mostly spiritual, right? It may be physical as well.

[24 : 14] Maybe not for all of us. We're not all called to martyrdom. But here's the reality. People over thousands and thousands of years in our Christian faith have read this text and have known what it means to say yes to this.

Even today, right now, in persecuted countries where you are not allowed to follow Jesus under penalty of death, people are looking and saying, the same response as us. You and I sitting here right now, they have made the same decision.

I will follow Jesus, I will die to myself, and I will go where he goes, and I will obey him, he will be my Lord, and to any end. And for some people in those contexts, in those countries, that does mean that they are risking their life every day.

But here's the beauty of the call. It is the same call to discipleship, whether we are in comfortable America or we are in persecuted countries.

Which means, Jesus had one thing, one thing in mind. Die to yourself and follow me. Wherever it leads, wherever I go, step by step, I want you to obey my commands and watch me as your Lord guide and direct you.

[25 : 26] So identifying with Jesus, maybe this means gospel meditation in the morning. Thinking about Christ and all of his beauty. We talked about beholding Jesus. Identifying with him and all that he's done.

Abiding with him in prayer and in the word. Being transformed into him by being Jesus everywhere we go. Obeying his commands. Jesus once said that if you obey my commands, then you are my disciples.

People will know that because you obey me. John backs this up with the same thing, saying if we don't obey his commands and we claim to be disciples of Jesus, we are liars. Following Jesus means obeying the things he told us.

But I want to jump back to the word daily again. We're to deny ourself, pick up our cross daily, and follow Jesus. This is what it means to be a disciple. This emphasis for Jesus is on the all-consuming perpetual nature of discipleship.

There is never a day, hour, or second off the job when it comes to dying to self and following Jesus. This is our literal identity, church, as individuals and as a collective body.

[26 : 37] But here's what I want us to notice as well. Jesus seems to be giving these commands in a logical order. Meaning, you cannot do the next step until you do the previous. before anything else, one has to deny themselves before they can make a decision to pick up a cross.

And once you've picked up your cross, you're now able to identify with Jesus and see where he's going, trust in his gospel work, and say, I will follow this man.

This whole thing has gospel overtones all the way through it. All throughout the book of Acts, we see a call to faith as repent and believe. Trailer time, boys, I know you guys have seen that.

How many times have you seen repent and believe through Acts? Through a lot of Peter's and Paul's letters as well. Repentance and belief. Well, I think this is what Jesus is actually calling us to here as well without actually using the terms.

Denial of oneself is in essence the root of biblical repentance. And taking up one's cross is in essence the root of faith.

[27 : 45] Turning from my sin, denying myself, looking to Jesus by bearing my cross and following him. Choosing willingly to associate with death, specifically the manner in which Jesus died, death on a cross that allows for the forgiveness of sin.

which leads to verse 24. Verse 24 says this, For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it.

Now this seems like an interesting follow-up to verse 23 which is a call to action, to die to self, to follow Jesus in a really sacrificial way that's going to demand a lot of you, but here's what verse 24 is doing.

Verse 24 is so fantastic in that it extends the idea of death to all of life in a practical manner. Here's the question that Jesus asks, Hey, if you try to find your life on this earth by doing what you think is best, you will actually end up losing it.

But if you lose your life, in other words, deny yourself, take up your cross, die to yourself, you will actually save it is the word Luke uses here. But here's what's so great. Jesus is using an accounting term here with the word gain.

[29 : 13] It's a mathematical term in the Greek to add something onto your account. And I don't know about you, but I receive, we receive at our house a lot of product catalogs in our mail these days.

Seems like every time I open it up there's a new product catalog and if you're like me, I just throw those things, they don't even come in the house, they just go right into the recycling bin on my way into the house. But here's what I will say, if you don't know what I'm talking about, companies like Amazon, Costco, Pottery Barn, on and on, used to be Bed, Bath, and Beyond, R.I.P.

We used to get a lot of theirs. They send catalogs with all their new inventory and all the great things that they have that you can buy. And the goal with those catalogs is they make them really trendy, really flashy, to catch your eye, so that you'll flip through it and go, oh, this is cool, I'm just gonna look through it, I'm not gonna, but soon enough, you go halfway through and you're like, I have to get that, I'll be back in an hour.

They gotcha, okay? If you like catalogs, good for you. I see them as a materialistic death trap. Okay, moving on from that, here's what I want to point out.

Jesus is kind of alluding to a life with this verse 24, in which, if somebody gave you a catalog of all the possessions, products, merchandise, from all the stores in the entire globe, and then gave it to you and said, pick what you want, and you're able to just go through and pick, and it would arrive on your doorstep the next day.

[30 : 44] If you had that scenario, what would you do? Because here's what he's essentially saying, if you got that choice and you selected everything and picked all the stuff and arrived on your doorstep, you have the whole world, you have everything you could ever want.

Imagine the catalog actually gave you control over the whole earth. That catalog would have given you everything and yet nothing. For even the person who owns the whole world will die one day and all of their stuff, everything they had, is gone in an instant, and they are left bare before Christ.

And on the judgment day when he returns, we will stand before him, each and every one of us. Some of us will be clothed in white and a garment of holiness, Christ's righteousness, all that we have in that moment before the great white throne, and some of us will stand bare, naked, and vulnerable with nothing.

Let's keep reading Jesus' words. Verse 25, What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?

Verse 26, For whoever is ashamed of me and my words of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. He's talking about when he returns.

[32 : 12] And when he returns, those who have Christ will have everything, and those who do not have Christ will have nothing. So here's the call of the discipleship. Die to yourself, pick up your cross, and follow me.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. Instead of choosing the things of the world and choosing a life that's filled with all things, here's what Jesus is calling us to do.

A second option. Choose Jesus and be satisfied in what he brings, whatever he brings, as you follow him in life. Nothing else needed, nothing else wanted.

Jesus does meet all of our needs. The gospel is fully sufficient for a life of joy, like a deep, deep well that will never run dry. If we follow Jesus and turn in repentance and faith to what he has for us for the first time or for the thousandth time, we continue every day, disciples, to turn to Jesus, to deny ourself, to lay down our life, to crucify ourselves so that we might have Christ and Christ alone.

That is our call as disciples. Here's what Jesus provides for us. He's not going to give you a hammer, but he is going to give you this. Reconciliation with God from enemy to child.

[33 : 34] Redemption, buying you back from the clutches of sin and death. Justification, cleansing you from the stain of sin and making you righteous. suffering for you to absorb the wrath of God on your wickedness that you should have taken and instead letting us go free in his love.

Covering you with the grace of God by his compassion and wonderful love. Leading us by still waters, making us lie down in green pastures. Walk with him every day.

He'll shelter you in the valley of the darkness and of death with his rod of power. Walk with Jesus and he will lead you to life. If anybody says I'm a follower of Jesus but has not considered the death of themselves is a liar.

It's a faker. Just like I have an aviation leather bag that I love. It opens up on the top so you can reach down as a pilot. I have that bag. I got an aviation watch right here.

Have I ever flown a plane? No. I'd be a faker. I like aviation stuff but aviation guys I got no idea what I'm doing in the plane but I like your stuff.

[34 : 46] I had one person that saw my bag in a coffee shop and said are you a pilot? I didn't have to show him my watch. I kind of covered it. And what did I say back to him?

No I'm not. I'm a pastor. So too here's what Jesus is doing in this text. He says to all. Hey you want to be my disciple? Anyone that wants to follow after me?

Yeah you all want to follow don't you? Deny yourself take up your cross and then we can talk. Jesus says stuff like this a lot. Luke 14 now great crowds accompanied him and he turned and said to them if anyone comes after me and does not hate his own father, mother, brother, wife, children, brothers and sisters yes and even his own life he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. And then he says down in verse 33 any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple. It's non-negotiable.

Matthew 13 The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field which a man found and covered up that in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls who on finding one pearl of great value went and sold all that he had and bought it.

[36 : 01] Mark 10 20 And he said to him I love that. And said to him you lack one thing go sell all that you have give to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven and come follow me.

Disheartened by the saying the rich young ruler went away sorrowful for he had great possessions. There's a decision to be made by each and every one of us.

Will we follow Jesus? Will we be his disciples? Or will we reject his call? Here's what I want to encourage us. Death is a requirement to be a disciple.

However Jesus has grace even for us who on certain days if you're like me wake up and say not today. I won't be a disciple today Lord.

I'm going to live in my sin I'm going to refuse to repent I'm going to refuse to deny myself I'm going to refuse to take up my cross today it's too uncomfortable I don't like it I'm not following today.

[37 : 14] If you're like me too many days are like that. Here's what Jesus does he loves us so much that he will wait at the side of the road always ready to receive us back.

every day of your life is marked by a savior that goes before you and calls you to follow. And his grace is so sufficient that even on the days where we stop stepping we say I won't go any further I can't today he will still call us back the next day.

Yesterday I was working in one of our rooms and my two youngest girls Camilla and Sadie start tromping around the hall down towards the room and I hear these loud sounds well Sadie had put her feet in my shoes and Camilla had put her feet in mom's shoes and they're three, four, five times too big for them and they're stomping laughing oh we're wearing mom and dad's shoes but what happens when you wear shoes that are way too big?

You trip and man they're boom boom boom and they got back up laughing put their feet back in and kept walking in our shoes it was so cute and then it hit me this was yesterday trying to follow Jesus is kind of like wearing shoes that are way too big I don't know about you if you've ever tried to follow Christ the goal is transformation that's what discipleship is about that we're going to follow Jesus and become more like him so I need to be like Jesus I need to follow him I need to do the things he did I need to say the things he did I find myself in shoes that are way too big tripping everywhere and here's the reality if you follow Jesus you will probably trip because that's a high standard but here's what Jesus offers grace for us to conform us to his image there's a great book that was written about transformation and there's an author that comments on it Jerry Bridges' name he breaks down two passages 1st 2nd Corinthians 3 and Romans 8 29 basically you can put those up

I think it's on the next slide 1st 2nd Corinthians 3 here's what he says 2nd Corinthians 3 says this now the Lord is the spirit and where the spirit of the Lord is there is freedom and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another that image that we are being transformed into is Christ his image so first of all 2nd Corinthians 3 transformed is the word basically it means this that the process of discipleship the goal is to become like Jesus Christ likeness but then in Romans 8 29 Paul uses a very similar phrase listen to this and we know that for those who love God you know this verse all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose but listen to the next verse for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers this word conformed is not talking about us becoming it's talking about us finalizing we were predestined by God the Father to be conformed in that moment when we are glorified into the very likeness of Jesus the completeness where it's over we're finally like him these are wonderful things that talk about the goal of our discipleship why are we following Jesus to become more like him now before we talk quickly about these application points from this what does it mean transformational discipleship for you for me for us as a church a hugely important principle in applying discipleship is this you are not ready to help others follow Jesus unless you yourself are seeking to follow him we say that one more time you are not ready to help others follow Jesus unless you yourself are seeking to follow him in other words disciples make disciples followers make followers and we do this together on the same road here's what's amazing

[41 : 15] Jesus said this to all and so if anyone said yes I will deny myself I'll take it my cross I'll follow you we are now shoulder to shoulder following Jesus our Savior all as disciples and we are all helping each other continue to follow so three big questions on how we apply discipleship how does discipleship happen the how question here's the how question denying ourselves and following Jesus daily of course is the how but here's some practical ways that we might do it in this church corporate discipleship discipleship in church culture is often associated primarily with you and I as individuals but here's what I want to encourage us with we believe that following Jesus begins early in the week in corporate worship with the entire body is gathered our corporate worship is the primary means given to us by which God calls us to edify and encourage one another in our faith and in our following of him lone ranger Christianity has run its course and has still come back founding to be wanting when Jesus made the discipleship call he was speaking to all we walk together in faith that's corporate discipleship we structure our worship gatherings intentionally centered around worshipful elements that help us deny ourselves take up our crosses so that we can follow

Jesus together second how do we do it community discipleship this comes by form of smaller groups of believers in the church gathering together for more intimate connection and helping one another follow at this church a huge way we do that is through community groups so if you're part of a community group we encourage you to continue on in that if you're not we would love to get you plugged in but community groups and small groups like Bible studies or any sort of group that you yourself can start getting together with other believers to walk through intentionally following Christ our third one would be mentor discipleship a huge part of my testimony is growing in my faith in the context of an older godly godlier man saying hey I want to come alongside you and help you grow find a mentor find someone to mentor that's what it means to be a disciple and then lastly personal discipleship the informal daily discipleship that each one of us is called to take part in to read the word to pray to be connected with Jesus abiding in him as his personal disciples so the second question when did discipleship happen this one's pretty straightforward every day every hour if you're walking with Jesus on his path even a misstep here or there puts us behind but we can always catch up in his grace every moment of the day is a chance to follow Jesus more accurately and then finally where does discipleship happen we'll end with this here's some specific ideas of how I might view discipleship happening in the context of a church discipleship is not just when one-on-one happens it's not just when we meet together as a church discipleship is every part of our Christian life together as a lived faith community at the bedside what are your disciplines that you're engaging in right now how are you seeking the feet of Jesus every morning every night at the coffee shop this might be a more one-on-one setting

I meet with a lot of you one-on-one throughout the week I love those times or maybe one-on-two one-on-three whatever at the park ask somebody maybe not right now but when the weather gets nicer or ask somebody the park could also be your board game table at your house fellowship connect with others and don't forget you are discipling one another as you do that at the dining the dining room or the dinner table family shepherding husbands wives moms dads we have a calling to raise up followers of Jesus pray with your children read with them sing with them help guide their little feet on the path of discipleship in the living room when you've got a group of people over love on them serve them with food and grow in your faith together and finally in the sanctuary we already talked corporate worship finally I want to encourage us next week church we get the great great honor and privilege to participate in and observe our first baptism by God's grace we will see a follower of Jesus make their preliminary confession of faith to turn from their sin this person has denied themselves they've taken up their cross and now they're saying I got to baptize myself

I got to be baptized in the name of Jesus rather to proclaim that the cross has changed and transformed me completely I want to live for Jesus so next week do not miss it our custodian Tom will be undergoing the waters of baptism that's what discipleship is about let's pray Lord thank you so much for this wonderful morning I pray Lord as we take these things Lord at face values we wrestle with the truths from your word Lord that you'd help us to see that transformational discipleship being made into your image by denying ourselves picking up the cross and following you is a wonderful beautiful blessed thing and Jesus I pray next week as Tom by your grace comes and undergoes baptism Lord publicly professing his faith in you and committing himself to walking after you for a lifetime

I pray that we rejoice in that Lord you would sustain him that you'd encourage our body to do the same through his profession in your name we pray amen