

Discipleship

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Preacher: Rev Donald M Macleod

[0 : 00] Brothers, sisters and friends, a joy to worship the Lord again together this evening. It's the same intimations as the morning. Remember there's intimation sheets. A few left at the back door. And welcome of course this evening especially to Catherine.

We thank you for your presence with us. Remember the fellowship just after the evening service in the hall next door. I want a reminder that tomorrow at 7 a short deacon's court. It's not on the sheet but just to say tomorrow at 7 a short deacon's court. We're praying this week especially for Govan Hill.

Especially it's the Romani people really and of other close groups that they have in that congregation. And providentially in the Lord's way quite a gathering has gathered over the last few years.

So much so that there's sermons now when the minister preaches they've been translated into various languages at the same time during the church service. We pray for Govan Hill. We give praise to God for work going on there. Also praying for the OM team who are involved in hope to the Hebrides on the west side.

Those who worked hard for a week and as we're saying recently we're hearing now gospel blessing from that week of work. We're here to worship the Lord. We can do so in Sing Psalms first of all in Psalm 98.

[1 : 27] Sing Psalms Psalm 98 verses 1 down to verse 4 that's page 129. Sing Psalms Psalm 98 page 129 singing verses 1 down to verse 4 sing a new song to the Lord for wonders He has done His right hand and His holy arm the victory have won the Lord declared His saving work and made it to be known to all the nations of the world His righteousness is shown.

Psalm 98 verses 1 to 4 I'll stand and sing if you're able. Oh sing a new song song to the Lord for wonders He has done His right hand and His holy arm their victory have won His righteousness is shown His Lord the Lord the Lord He cared His saving work and made it to be known to all the nations of the world His righteousness is shown His whole love

His love It's just udah bunun It's just love mis organizing His■■■ HisJA He has remembered It's just love His ■■■■on His■ His gratitude people in Jort His Christ His peace ut■ his are ahora God And all the nations of the earth have seen what God has done.

Her God, who brings deliverance by his sight and alone.

I claim the Lord, O holy air, shout the way and rejoice, because he can be true, and to him lift up your voice.

[4 : 28] Let's now join together in a word of prayer. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you once more for this time of worship together, this gathering of your people once more.

Thank you, Lord, that we find ourselves at this end of the day, worshipping you once more. At this end of the day, worshipping you together as sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, also as friends joining us.

Together as one family, as sons and daughters and brothers and sisters, we worship you. Thank you, Lord, for the privilege we have of having this day, this day you have created for us, this day you set aside for our benefit, this day you set aside for us to rest in, to find a time of peace during an otherwise busy week.

this day you set aside for us to rest in, this day you gave us as a gift, a reminder that this Sabbath day was made for man and not man for the Sabbath.

It was given to us by you. Help us then to enjoy this rest day. Help us to make the most of it, to enjoy time in your word publicly, time in your word privately, to enjoy the beauty of nature, to enjoy the beauty of fellowship, to enjoy discussing and thinking through who you are and what you have done for us, to think through the glory and the beauty of the covenant faithfulness, the covenant love shown to us in the coming of the Lord Jesus and his life, his perfect life and his death, as we heard this morning, and his resurrection.

[6 : 06] And is now continuing forever at your right hand, making that constant intercession for us, fully man and fully God forever, showing in his body the marks of his love for us.

Help us, Lord, then, to come this evening with a heart full of joy, joy of the privilege we have of coming around your word once more, as brothers and sisters this evening, to come around and to hear what it is you're saying to us from your word.

Help us to concentrate. We admit, Lord, we come to his place this evening, and there are many things on our minds, many distractions which we bring to this place in this time of worship, many stresses and strains and worries.

We prayed this morning for our family worries, our family stresses. We pray for ourselves this evening, our personal worries, the things which weigh us down. Pray, Lord, just now for those of us who are going through hard times physically.

Lord, you know the full detail and the full reality. Pray just now for any who are going through hard times mentally. Again, Lord, you know the full detail, and you alone know our situation.

[7 : 13] Pray for any who are going through great family troubles, great family worries, great job worries, good job troubles. Lord, you know the full extent of all that assails us day by day and week by week.

We come to this place this evening reminded that we are weak. In our minds, in our bodies, at times we find everything so overwhelming. Help us, Lord, to find our rest in you, one who promises to be there for his people, time without end, the one who is a solid rock, the one who never changes, the one who is there and will be there with us and carry us and lead us for all time, time without end.

Help us, we ask in these days of our lives, to be faithful witnesses to you. Pray for our witness here locally in North Tulsa. Help us in our conduct, publicly but also privately at home.

Help all our words, all our actions, our very thoughts be captured to our Saviour. All that we do and think and say, every public act we do, it be seen and be known as we are those who love and who serve Jesus.

We do thank you for North Tulsa. I pray just now for every home represented in this village. Pray especially for the homes in this village, who as of yet have no gospel knowledge.

[8 : 35] I ask, Lord, you would use us as salt and light in this place. Help us to be faithful witnesses, gentle, kind, but at the same time, Lord, to be bold as we proclaim the gospel.

There is no way of salvation, there is no way of hope other than through the Lord Jesus Christ. To pray for ourselves this morning and today we also now remember the wider world.

We come praying in this small corner, in this small church, this small gathering. We give you praise, Lord, that our prayers are heard in the courts of heaven. That although we at times feel small in our prayers, although at times our prayers themselves are small, we are praying to a God who is not small.

You hear our prayers, you take our prayers. We pray then our small prayers concerning the reality we see around us. We see a world suffering, a world in pain.

We are mindful, especially just now, of the ongoing conflicts and warfares around this world. We pray for the public and well-known and well-seen conflicts. Pray, Lord, just now for the ongoing devastation we are seeing in Gaza.

[9 : 44] Lord, that your justice will be done there. Pray, Lord, the ongoing situation as we see ongoing conflict in various parts of Russia and Ukraine.

Lord, again, your justice will be done there. We feel at times so small and so helpless that physically there's nothing we can do. We bring just now to you your people on both sides of these conflicts.

We know that you have your people in these countries. Pray for them. They keep serving you well in times of great difficulty. Keep serving you well against nations and states which despise them, which cannot stand the gospel truth.

Also, remember the lesser-known wars and the various conflicts going on in that great continent of Africa, these many nations. We see and we hear of brewing trouble in sub-Saharan Africa.

Lord, we see the rising conflict, the rising tensions, and we leave that with you. Pray, Lord, for the ongoing conflict in the Balkans area as we see again and hear again of rising tensions and rising conflicts there.

[10 : 56] Lord, we are so far away. In our lives, we are so peaceable. We have such an easy life in terms of our nation here. We have no fear of warfare, no fear of being destroyed by passing jets or by bombs.

We cannot enter into their misery, but we bring them before the throne of grace, to one who knows what it is to suffer in ways we will never understand. We also pray, Lord, for the ongoing situation in Central Europe.

As we hear of floods and increasing floods, pray, Lord, for those who have lost members of their family and loved ones even this day. Pray, Lord, for the areas and the towns and the townships that are seeming to be flooded just now.

Lord, we ask you to be there as we see the very reality of the nature itself as affected and tainted by the fall. That in our hearts and our experience we see the effect of evil in this world.

Lord, we look forward to the day when justice is done, where there's no more tears, where there's no more bloodshed, there's no more pain. Look forward to that day in the future and long, Lord, we ask for it to come soon where we see the perfection of all things, the wrapping up and the tearing away of this world and the bringing in of the new creation of the new heavens and the new earth.

[12 : 18] Until these days of glory are seen in our land, Lord, we ask you to be with us and keep us. Pray for our own nation, Lord, we thank you for a peaceable nation. Thank you, Lord, for days of peace and indeed decades of peace.

We also do pray for the ongoing tensions we are seeing in some cities, tensions which are still erupting every so often into fighting and into great loss and great pain.

Pray, Lord, for our governments over us, those you've set over us in civil matters. Pray, Lord, for the council locally. Pray, Lord, for Holyrood. Pray, Lord, for Westminster. Pray, Lord, for those you have placed over us in all these matters.

Give them wisdom, we ask. Give them understanding in how to lead our nations well. Well, we ask as always, first and foremost, that those who are over us in these great duties would themselves understand there is one over them.

Pray, Lord, for our council leaders. Pray, Lord, for our first minister, our prime minister, and our king. We ask you would find they would find that there is a saviour, there is a king, there is a lord they must one day answer to.

[13 : 29] We ask, Lord, they would find him now and know him now. We ask, Lord, they would reflect his service, reflect his leading and their leading. Until we see days of gospel, prosperity in our land, help us to be faithful in these days.

Help us to be thankful for the time you've placed us in. Remindful this evening of our fellowship. Lord, we thank you for the privilege we have of joining together, of a time of food, a time of fellowship, but mindful of the topic of our fellowship.

But we live in an island where there is indeed so much need. Perhaps that need at times is hidden and it's not seen by us or not known by us, but we know it is there.

Help us, Lord, then to be mindful, to be practical, to be a praying people, to offer practical support if needed and if available to those in our area and those around us who need that hand.

Help us to be the hands and feet of our saviour, as it were, in all that we seek to do. Thank you, Lord, for the gift of charities and groups and individuals who are willing to give their time and give their energy.

[14 : 34] They give off themselves, they give their resources to help the least of these, to help the vulnerable, to help the uncared for, to help, as it were, the orphan and the widow. Help us, we ask, individually, but also as a congregation to be more mindful of them, of these groups, of these individuals in need, even in our own midst.

Pray, Lord, for your ongoing gospel work in North Tolstair. We thank you for the hope explored. We pray again this coming week, this coming Tuesday, if you will, that, Lord, you would help us to gather again to hear now the peace we find in Jesus.

Not just hope, but peace. A peace that no one else and nothing else in this world offers us. We find it in him and in him alone. Help us, Lord. Pray, Lord, for any who are on the fence about coming to Hope Explored, but who are nervous about coming to the manse, who are nervous about meeting with us, who are nervous about discussing and sitting down and sharing their thoughts, Lord, that you give them peace.

Give them peace in their hearts and know that they can come and share their burdens, share their questions, share their thoughts, or could they come and just sit silently and just take in what's being said.

Lord, you'd be glorified for all our efforts all our efforts. We know are, if they're not blessed by you, they will come to nothing. We ask, Lord, then you would indeed bring life, bring life to the soil we are seeking to sow seeds in and water and till and water and till and water in this village you've given us.

[16 : 04] Help us, Lord, then to serve you well in this day of small things awaiting the day of great harvest. Look after us, Lord, and keep us, forgive us for sin. We confess this evening in our thoughts, our words, our actions.

We have sinned against you. Lord, rescue us, we ask, from the temptations we face day by day. Help us to see the beauty of our Saviour and therefore see the horror and the disgust and the darkness of sin.

We come asking all these things, relying on Jesus who holds us, who keeps us, and who loves us in his name and for his sake. Amen. Let's turn to read in God's Word.

Turn into 1 Timothy chapter 1. That's page 932 in the Church Bibles. 1 Timothy chapter 1, page 932.

1 Timothy chapter 1, page 932.

[17 : 08] Let's hear together the Word of God. Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by command of God our Saviour and of Christ Jesus our hope, to Timothy, my true child in the faith, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

As I urged you when I was going to Macedonia, remain at Ephesus so that you may charge certain persons not to teach any different doctrine nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies which promote speculations rather than the stewardship from God that is by faith.

The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Certain persons by swerving from these have wandered away into vain discussion, desiring to be teachers of the law without understanding either what they are saying or the things about which they make confident assertions.

Now we know that the law is good if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners, for the unholy and profane, for those who strike their fathers and mothers, for murderers, for sexually immoral, many who practice homosexuality, enslavers, liars, perjurers, whatever else is contrary to sound doctrine in accordance with the gospel of the glory of the blessed God of which I have been entrusted.

I thank him who has given me strength, Christ Jesus our Lord, because he judged me faithful, appointing me to his service. While formerly I was a blasphemer, persecutor, an insolent opponent, but I received mercy because I had acted ignorantly in unbelief and the grace of our Lord overflowed for me with the faith and love around Christ Jesus.

[19 : 07] The saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost, but I received mercy for this reason, that in me, as a foremost, Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who are to believe in him for eternal life.

To the king of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God, the honour and glory forever and ever. Amen. This charge I entrust to you, Timothy, my child, in accordance with the prophecies previously made about you, that by them you may wage a good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience.

By rejecting this, some have made shipwreck of their faith, among whom are Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom I have handed over to Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme.

So on, to God's glory and to God's praise we give him praise for his perfect word. Let's again sing, this time singing in the Scottish Psalter and Psalm 92.

Scottish Psalter, Psalm 92. Scottish Psalter, Psalm 92. That's on page 353.

[20 : 35] Scottish Psalter, Psalm 92, page 353. We sing verses 12 down to verse 15 of the Psalm. Psalm 92, verses 12 to the end.

But like the palm tree flourishing, shall be the righteous one, he shall like to the cedar grow, but is in Lebanon, those that within the house of God are planted by his grace, they shall grow up and flourish all in our God's holy place.

Psalm 92, verses 12 to 15. To God's praise. Amen. Psalm 93, verse 12 to the cedar grow, but is in the cedar grow, the righteous one, he shall like to the cedar grow, that is in the cedar grow, the righteous one, he shall like to the cedar grow, He shall like to the cedar grow, and he shall like to the cedar grow, that is in Lebanon.

Oh, sat within the house of God, And I'll give my grace, it shall grow up and flourish, And I'll give my grace, it shall grow up and flourish, For love's love and may be glad is here.

It should have come, right is the Lord, He is the Lord to be here, And ye come of the righteousness, Is all together free.

[23 : 16] Amen. Let's turn back to God's word. We can turn a few pages on to 2 Timothy now. Let's turn back to God.

We'll take verse 2 just to help us later on. 2 Timothy chapter 1 verse 2. To Timothy, my beloved child, grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.

If you're with us in the morning, we said we've swapped over our two series. We're doing a series on Acts, but also in the morning usually a series on the ABCs of the Gospel.

Remember we've got now to letter D this evening. Last week we saw the reality of what it is to follow Jesus. Before that, A, we saw all of sinned.

When in B, saw but God and mercy of God. Well, now we get to D. Discipleship.

[24 : 25] Discipleship. It's the next logical step, isn't it? Once you see the need for salvation, once you believe in Jesus, once you have your sins, as it were, wiped away, you have the punishment taken away from you, you're made a new creature, a new creation, what then?

What does it mean? What does it look like to live life as a Christian? Remember, that is one of our goals as a congregation, isn't it? To preach Christ, yes, but also to grow together in the love and the knowledge of who Jesus is.

So to help us this evening, we'll look at a few texts, but in the back of our minds we'll stay in 2 Timothy. Just to help us then, we'll start off with looking at a definition of discipleship.

A scriptural definition of discipleship. And then later on looking at Timothy as an example of how discipleship plays out in the church, what it might look like for us.

First of all then, a definition of discipleship. The reminder for us is that following Jesus is not just a logical knowing.

[25 : 38] As I said before, there's plenty of professors, plenty of very intelligent men and women. When you're studying in the Free Church College, you're right next door to a new college.

A new college is run by Edinburgh University. And in a new college, there are geniuses next door. And below ETS, below the Free Church College, there's a cafe there.

And in that cafe, the conversations you hear are amazing. Now most of the words I didn't begin to understand are far too advanced for me, but conversations of these professors, and you'd hear them, and you feel bad for listening in, but some of the conversations are fascinating.

Quite often they talk quite loud anyway, and you're hearing all the discussions about who Jesus might have been, and what he was, and the depths of who he is. But yet, many of these professors, for a fact, have no belief whatsoever in this man they talked and they knew so much about.

Having a mental knowledge of Jesus is not a disciple. It's more than that, isn't it? There must be a following. There must be a real heart and mind and soul change.

[26 : 50] It means we love him, therefore we want to follow him. So where do we look for for a scriptural definition, then, of discipleship? I'll read these verses for us.

The most famous, perhaps, is the Great Commission. Look at chapter 9. By looking on then, Luke chapter 9, we see, we'll leave the Great Commission for a few weeks' time when we see mission.

Tonight, Luke chapter 9, verse 23, I'll read the verses for us. He said to all, If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, 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. This is one of the most definite, solid definitions of discipleship.

And in many ways, it's quite a hard one to come to first, because this verse where Jesus is very clear, that discipleship has a cost. And you'd rather that verse didn't say that, in terms of getting folks to believe.

[27 : 55] You'd love people to say, Come to Jesus, it will cost you nothing, salvation's free. But come to Jesus, and your life won't have to change. You won't change. Your situation won't change.

Come to Jesus, tick the box, go to heaven, and everything else is fine. That's not what we see in these verses. That's not what the scriptures teach us, what true discipleship is.

Discipleship here is defined in several ways by our Savior. Quite simply, to be a disciple of Jesus is to have him as master over all that you are and all that you do.

The language of discipleship, of master, comes from those who would follow around the rabbis, who would spend every waking moment as they were walking behind them, copying everything they did, following every single action they did, seeking to be like them in every single way.

To be a disciple is to lovingly follow Jesus for all the days of our life, but not doing it in our power. And here's where the gospel comes in.

[29 : 08] It's a very man-centered, it's a very wrong thinking to say, well, to be a disciple of Jesus, to follow him and to try hard and try your best, that's true. But it's not in our power we're doing that.

If it relied on our power to follow him, not one of us, myself included, would last any length of time whatsoever. He keeps his people. At the same time, we are called to strive after him.

He said to all, if anyone would come after me, let him deny himself, take up his cross and daily follow me. To be a disciple means to follow Jesus.

For those early Christians, these first Christians, the Christians we heard this morning in Acts, to follow Jesus, it wasn't just, okay, I'll go to church a few times now and I'll go to the prayer meeting and I'll go to this and I'll do that and I'll serve him.

What did it mean for them? It meant to follow him. And for these early Christians to say, yes, I believe that Jesus is Lord and Saviour, it was the most dangerous thing you could possibly do.

[30 : 22] For many, and we know for almost all the apostles, almost all, to follow Jesus meant to follow him to their literal, excruciating at times, grim at times, death.

It's not in scripture really, but we see and we know from history, we have a sense from history of how all the disciples died. Apart from John, the rest all die in the most horrific way possible.

Grim, grim stuff. The early church is the exact same. There's that quote, but it's true, grim although it is, that the early church springs forward, the gospel springs forward.

Why? Because the ground was, as it were, fertilized with the blood of the martyrs. Men and women and young people who are willing to follow Jesus whatever the cost.

And we say that and we preach that and we say, yes, I will follow Jesus. For these early Christians, it meant real physical danger.

[31 : 23] We pray every week, we try to remember every week, brothers and sisters around the world for whom this is still the situation. To follow Jesus is not just something they can do so easily.

It means perhaps their family and friends abandoning them, if not worse, seeking their end. It means their businesses being targeted or shut down completely.

It means their society, their area, their group of people, their friend group, their very culture shunning them away. To follow Jesus to many Christians in this world is a very costly thing.

And for us, it is also a costly thing, isn't it? Not to the same extent we know that and we give praise to God for that, that our lives are not in danger to follow Jesus. But even for us, we know to follow Jesus it comes at a cost.

Salvation is free, the gift is free, and we'll labour that and preach that until the day we stop. But to follow Jesus, it is come at a cost. It does come at a cost.

[32 : 28] To follow Jesus, to be a disciple of Jesus, it's not a call just to gather up knowledge and then to stay at a distance. There's no such thing as an intellectual-only Christian.

I said this morning, becoming a Christian does not mean you turn your brain off. There's no such thing as blind faith or blind hope. But following Jesus is not an intellectual understanding of who Jesus is.

It's that call to follow him. Mind, yes, but also body and soul. It's a call for a whole heart following after him from this day on forever.

Despite all the failures we'll make, all the disasters, all the times we'll mess up, and we will, we keep on going, keep on following, keep on trusting that he is ours and that we are his.

As Jesus says, it's not just a call to follow, it's also a call to what? To deny ourselves. To deny ourselves. We'll see this more in a second.

[33 : 32] It's a call to lay ourselves aside, to say, I am not in charge of my own life. I am not the end-all and be-all. I am not king or queen, as it were, over my whole existence.

But it is one over me who I now follow instead of my way. We covered before weeks ago, months ago, the healing of blind Bartimaeus. That glorious image of the end of the healing where Jesus says to him, you're healed, go your way.

And what does the Bible tell us to take place? Bartimaeus goes his way. And what is his way? The Bible says to us, Bartimaeus got up and he follows Jesus in his way. He follows Jesus.

Jesus says, go your way, you're healed, I have saved you. I've given you vision. I've brought you back from, as it were, darkness now to light. And Bartimaeus follows Jesus because Jesus is now his way.

He's become a disciple. To be saved, yes, a free grace from God. And we know that and we hold to that and we'll fight for that till the end.

[34 : 37] But to become a Christian, it will cost you your life. You will no longer live for you. You will no longer live for yourself.

You will now live for the God who made you, the God who knows you, and the God who has saved you. Again, this is what Jesus says to his disciples, isn't it? It's what he says.

Whoever will lose, whoever will save his life will lose it. Verse 24. But whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. Whoever would save his life will lose it.

But whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. In one sense, if you keep on doing your own thing, if you never come to Jesus, you will save your life.

You will keep living the life you want and the way you want and the style you want for as long as you want. In one sense, by the end of the day, your life will be gone. You will lose your life.

[35 : 36] All the years you put into it. All the achievements you have. As many as they may be. As good as they may be. As impressive as they might be. A life spent following anyone, everyone apart from Jesus ends up in no life whatsoever.

The opposite is also true. If you, as it were, lose your life over to Jesus, it awaits for you hope, eternal hope, peace, eternal peace, joy, eternal joy.

And again, for the disciples to lose their life for Jesus, it wasn't just a theory or a theological thing. They would experience it. They would be asked at some point to trust.

Do they trust in Jesus? Do they follow Jesus? Even this afternoon, I've forgotten his name. You see now how I forgot my wallet so quickly. I forgot his name straight away. One of the early Christians, second century Christians, and we have it in the Roman records.

They were good at keeping their records. The court case is there and it's how bureaucratic and how just legal and simple it is. There's that early Christian church leader and he's asked quite simply to renounce Jesus.

[36 : 50] It's working very formally, all proper. There's a whole way of doing it. They established and they treat him nicely. They treat him kindly. They speak to him well. It's a court situation. And I say, will you announce this Jesus?

Blah, blah, blah. Of course he says no. Next line is, justice was enacted on so and so. He was removed from the building and his head was taken off and so and so and that's it done.

Bureaucratic, simple. The early Christians faced the ending of their lives so easily, so quickly for daring to follow Jesus. Again, we don't have that worry.

We don't have that danger hanging over us. But the call to us is still the same call. To lose our life for the sake of Jesus. Which means what? We must die.

To follow Jesus means a death to self, a death to our own egos, a death to our own sin, a death to our own desire for us to be supreme ruler over all things.

[37 : 54] We say no. I now follow you. I now serve you. I am now yours and you are now mine. J.C. Ryle summarizes for us.

As the soldier follows his general, as the servant follows the master, as the scholar follows the teacher, as the sheep follow the shepherd, so the Christian follows Jesus.

To be a disciple means to follow Jesus. Not just mentally, not just to understand Jesus, but to follow him, heart, mind, body, and soul.

To say, I am yours and you are mine. Lead me where I must go. And to trust, to trust that he is good. To trust that he is not some arbitrary, uncaring, distant king, but he is a friend who leads you, who guides you, who says to you, your life is now mine and I will lead you and take you in places and take you in ways you would never begin to hope or imagine.

When I was younger in my young teens, you would often hear speaking, when people speak to us as teens, would say, the Christian life is not boring. And really, they weren't wrong, were they?

[39 : 06] The Christian life is not boring. We now serve the master of all masters, the king of kings who created, sustains, at this very moment, the universe.

to place your life into his hands, the one who gave you life in the first place. Who else better to look after you, to keep you, to take you?

Discipleship means to deny yourself, but to give everything over to Jesus. How then does this look in practice? We read in 1 Timothy, now looking to 2 Timothy, we see that this is a man, of course, young Timothy, taught and helped by Paul.

He's been placed here in Ephesus, as we read in chapter 1 of 1 Timothy. Remember ourselves how hard Ephesus is, what a hard mission field Ephesus is, what a congregation it seems to be.

Poor young Timothy feels a bit stuck and Paul is writing to encourage this young man. If you turn with me and back to the chapter we had in 2 Timothy, here we see what discipleship looks like in practice.

[40 : 13] What lessons do we see here and how can we apply it to ourselves in Tulsa? What does it look like for us as Christians to follow Jesus well, to grow in Jesus?

There are roughly, we say, three main ways we are disciplined. Three main ways we grow in our love and knowledge of our Saviour. The preaching of a word, a private devotion, our own study, our own prayer, and so on.

And our gathering together as a family, whether in formal public worship in private homes, in fellowship after eating service, every time we gather together publicly or privately, that combined with the preaching of a word, combined with our own private growing in devotions and prayer and song, all that together leads to us being disciplined, to growing in our love and knowledge and our following of Jesus.

The first two options are obvious, aren't we? We all know to hear the word preached is good for us. We all know to our own private devotions. Perhaps the third option we forget about, that we grow together as a family.

But like any normal family, the more you are together, the better it is. The more you grow together, the more you learn how to support one another, how to love one another. That's why it's so important that we do have our two services, for example, our midweek meeting, for example, fellowships in times of gathering here and in the manse, everywhere else.

[41 : 44] Everything we do, we're doing it to grow together, to learn together, to go closer together as brothers and sisters. We keep saying this, but there's no such thing as a Christian on their own.

Every promise in the New Testament is given to Christians in plural. We're meant to serve and grow together. So what do we see, what can we learn here from the discipleship that Timothy receives from Paul and from the church that he is in?

First of all, we see then in verse 1 and verse 2 that growing Christians need a few things. Growing Christians need a few things. Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of the life that is in Jesus Christ.

To Timothy, my beloved child, grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Growing Christians need care from older Christians.

Paul, who is, yes, we know an apostle and everything else, but he is also an older Christian. And Timothy needs this letter from Paul. The second letter now from Paul.

[42 : 57] Timothy needs help. Growing Christians, brothers and sisters, we need care from older Christians. Now that's not always older in terms of age, it's older in terms of our maturity in Christ.

You have very young Christians by age, but they are far more mature than older Christians by age. And we love God's kingdom for that fact. The old and young we come together.

Younger Christians by Christian maturity need older Christians to come alongside them and to support them. We challenged this before a few months ago, but I should challenge you again and myself with you.

How are you seeking to encourage other Christians in this congregation? How are you seeking to come alongside them like Paul here does for Timothy? Timothy, my beloved child.

Growing Christians also need reminders of who God is and what God has done for them. Paul begins here by reminding Timothy who and what he has from Jesus.

[44 : 01] Grace, mercy, and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. To grow as a Christian means we have to be reminded all the time who Jesus is, what he has done for us.

It's one of the reasons why an evangelical ceremony is not just for the unsaved people. Every one of us to the most mature Christian here, every one of us does us well, doesn't it, to be reminded of the gospel hope we have in Jesus.

That there's no salvation anywhere else apart from him. It's all from him, all through him, him and him alone. Jesus plus nothing. We all need reminding of that.

Growing Christians need care from older Christians. Growing Christians need reminders of the promises they have in Jesus. Paul then carries on in verse 3, I thank God whom I serve as did my ancestors with a clear conscience as I remember you constantly in my prayers night and day.

Quite simply, we need to be praying for one another. To grow as a Christian, yes, we must pray ourselves, but also to grow as a Christian means others pray for you.

[45 : 22] We said that this morning, didn't we? We thought to ourselves of a generation that's gone before us who are praying for us. As Paul here prays for Timothy, as Paul here reminds Timothy he is praying for him.

Brothers and sisters, we need the same support, don't we? I know we're a praying congregation and we praise the Lord for that. Just to encourage you once more, I know many of you here are praying for everyone here in general.

I know you are and many of you here pray name by name for everyone else here. For some of us here perhaps, have you ever actually asked someone how can I pray for you or what can I pray for you?

Sometimes, not even just for information, but sometimes it's good for us to encourage someone else to say, I've been praying for you. That's all you have to say. I've been praying for you recently.

I was remembering you recently. Paul has no problem saying to Timothy, I've been remembering you constantly in my prayers. It's encouraging for us to say to one another and to mean it.

[46 : 24] I was praying for you last night. I was praying for you the other day. I'm remembering you and your situation. I am bringing you before the throne of grace. And by hearing that, you grow, don't you?

And by doing that as Christians, by praying for one another as a family, we grow together. Showing that care and concern for one another. So growing Christians need care from older Christians.

Growing Christians need to be praying for one another and to be prayed for. And moving on in verse 4. I remember your tears. I long to see you that I may be filled with joy.

I am reminded of your sincere faith. A faith that dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice. And now I am sure dwells in you as well.

Growing Christians, brothers and sisters, we need care and concern shown to us, don't we? Look how he words it to poor, struggling Timothy.

[47 : 23] As I remember your tears, I long to see you that I may be filled with joy. As I remember your tears. Paul is saying to Timothy there, I know you're having a hard time here.

I know the church and Ephesus are causing you problems. I know you're having issues with so and so and so and so. I know you're finding it hard to serve. But I remember your tears.

I remember your pain. I am here alongside you as a friend, as a father, as a brother. Brothers and sisters, growing Christians, if we're to grow well, we need others to care for us.

We need to care for one another. To have these quiet, at times awkward conversations, to say to someone, not just how are you and to move on, but to say to someone, how are you really?

What burdens can I bear for you? And also being willing to share your burdens to others. Hard, very easy to preach, very easy to talk about, very hard to actually do.

[48 : 29] But Paul has no problem saying to Timothy, I remember you. I care for you. I remember your tears. He also reminds Timothy that he is part of the family.

Timothy, of course, quite literally, Paul reminds him of his godly grandmother, his godly mother. He reminds him of his own lineage. And for some of us here, we have that great privilege, don't we?

We can think of godly parents and godly grandparents who were there for us, who supported us. Some of us don't have that. Some of us don't have godly parents or godly grandparents who prayed for us.

Some of us haven't had the privilege of that. What we do have is a church family. And Paul reminds Timothy there are those who have been praying for him and those who have been serving him and those who have been serving the Lord before him for years and years.

Brothers and sisters, we need to remind one another that we are part of the family together. We're all part of the same family. That's one family who have been serving the Lord together for many years.

[49 : 33] For this reason, verse 6, for this reason, I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God which is in you through the laying on of my hands.

For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Therefore, do not, verse 8, therefore, do not be ashamed of a testimony about our Lord nor of me as prisoner but share in suffering through the gospel by the power of God and so on.

Growing Christians need encouragement to use the gifts God has given us. The truth is, brothers and sisters, if we're here this evening, if we're part of this congregation, you have gifts the Lord has given you to use for a service in North Tulsa.

And perhaps you've never really spent time praying to the Lord what these gifts are. And perhaps the gifts the Lord has given you could be useful to the gospel cause in North Tulsa.

I know as a culture, I know in our own ways, we hate putting ourselves forward. It's against everything we think and believe in. I know it is. But sometimes, if you can see a gifting the Lord has given you and you see you're planning something perhaps to do with youth fellowship or with holiday club or some kind of door-to-door work or whatever you're planning in the future and you think, well, I've got a gift I can use for that.

[50 : 58] then let us know. Because we want to follow the example of Paul here to encourage you to use the gift God has given you for his glory in North Tulsa to bring glory to his name.

To show his power in you. And by using our gifts, by making full use of the gifts God has given us, we then grow together. By using his gifts, we then understand what it is to serve one another.

It's more than that, isn't it? For God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control. Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord, not of me, his prisoner, but share in the suffering of the gospel by the power of God.

Encouragement, yes, use your gifts but also encouragement to keep on going. At the end of the day, sometimes this is all we have to do, isn't it? Sometimes a Christian life is difficult.

This morning, the kids, we saw the broken teapot. A broken teapot can be replaced for 15 pounds in Amazon. A broken heart is harder to keep on going, isn't it?

[52 : 12] And sometimes a Christian life is hard. And sometimes to be a disciple it is hard. Sometimes it's hard to keep on serving. Sometimes it's hard to keep on giving.

Sometimes it's hard to keep on going. We think, I have failed him too much. I am too poor an example. I am too small. I am too useless. My service to him is too insignificant.

I am a rubbish example. I am a rubbish disciple. I am a useless servant. And so on and so on and so on. And again and again, Paul reminds Timothy to keep on going, keep on serving, keep on remembering all that has been given to him, all that he can do for the sake of the Lord.

Brothers and sisters, whether we were born here as many of us were or moved here, some of us have had the privilege to move here and be called here and to live here, whatever your story is, the Lord has placed us here in North Tolstice at this time in this place.

I know at times where many of you, you have seen this building full from front to back and upstairs. You have seen hundreds, as it were, pour down the roads around Tolstice and see that building and this building both full of.

[53 : 24] You have seen days of gospel blessing, gospel flourishing. I know it's hard. You think, well, these days were great, these days were full of hope. What about now? Our call is to be disciples, isn't it?

To keep on growing, keep on serving, keep on seeking to see our Saviour glorified. As we keep on, as we keep on seeking to encourage one another and build up one another and grow together as one family, we're then more powerful, as it were, to reach out.

As we encourage one another then by praying for one another, by coming alongside one another, by supporting one another, by strengthening one another, then we go to do door-to-door in the future or go to more evangelism in the future.

We're doing it together, praying for one another, upholding one another. It's hard to do it alone. We're never called to do it alone. We're called to serve the Lord together.

It's a hard task to be a disciple. In fact, it's an impossible task to be a disciple because it's not something we do by ourselves. We do it together, but also more than that, we do it in the Lord's power.

[54 : 38] It is Him we serve. And He who calls us will never leave us, nor forsake us, nor abandon us. As we heard last week in the morning, we heard it before and we'll quote it again, He does not call the equipped what He equips the called.

And not one of us feels worthy or able to do any of the tasks we've been given, but note how the Lord has blessed His work so far, even this past year, to His glory, to His praise. He is blessing His work as He ought in North Tulsa.

First, to encourage us brothers and sisters to keep on going. We're seeing results, not results of our plans and ideas, but results of the gospel going out in faith and the Lord then bringing His people in.

In His time, in His way, He is growing His church as He seems fit. And we're called to be part of that, called to be His servants, called to be His disciples.

So as Paul says to Timothy, keep on going. Keep on serving. Keep on remembering. Keep on praying. Keep on supporting one another that together, as one church family, we glorify God more and more with more power and more strength, more ability, and see the Lord work more and more in North Tulsa.

[55 : 56] Until we see these days of glory, our call is to keep on striving and to keep on going. It's about our heads now. A word of prayer. Lord, we thank You for the gift of Your Word and the challenge that You've called us to, to be Your disciples, to follow You, to, as I were, pick up our cross, to deny ourselves, to lay aside our own self-righteousness, our own goodness, and to look to You for everything that we have.

We thank You, Lord, for the great privilege we have of calling ourselves the disciples of our Saviour, the followers of our Saviour, to count it as a great privilege to have His name above our name and His purpose above our purpose and to know that as we seek to serve Him, we glorify Him in all we seek to do.

Bless, Lord, our time this evening. Thank You, Lord, for Your Word. Help us to leave this place having not just grown in our knowledge but also having grown. We pray in our love for our Saviour. We pray, Lord, for this evening.

We also thank You once more for the privilege of having a time of fellowship. Lord, we thank You for it. Help us, Lord, to enjoy the time, the informal time together and know it's good for us to be together.

Thank You, Lord, for those who lead the worship, the sung worship week by week as we sing Your words back to You, Lord. We know there are words which are true and words which are perfect, words which glorify You truly and well.

[57 : 15] Ask all these things in and through and for Jesus' precious name's sake. Amen. Let's bear time to a conclusion just now.

Scottish Psalter and Psalm 1. Scottish Psalter and Psalm 1. Remember, a few weeks ago, a few months ago now, we looked at this Psalm together with Psalm 2.

We saw in Psalm 1 this description of what it is, the ideal servant servant of the Lord. And yes, we aspire to the words of Psalm 1, but remember that in Psalm 1 we find it only complete in Jesus.

And it's Jesus alone who completes every single line of Psalm 1. This is what we aspire to as Lord's people. Psalm 1 has got to Psalter that, man half perfect blessedness who walketh not astray and counseleth ungodly men nor stands in sinners' way nor sitteth in the scorner's chair but placeth his delight upon God's law and meditates on his law day and night.

Psalm 1, the whole psalm to God's praise. Psalm 1, Psalm 1,

[59 : 21] Psalm 1, of the Lord's love and recopaed in civic activism inonia's church until He he is attempting to defend his~~ And all we done shall prosper Para, where we live on not so, but like they are, unfilled child, which will guide to them pro.

In judgment therefore shall I not stand, such as unloving are, nor in just every rule of the just shall be taken up here.

For by the way of God we end, bound to the Lord is known, whereas the way of wickedness shall fight the other cold.

I say grace first, then by an action. Lord, we thank you for the gift of fellowship and the gift of food together. Help us, Lord, to enjoy this evening, but also to understand we come together to hear of serious matters, and matters which require our prayer, and if possible, matters which require our assistance.

Thank you, Lord, for those, as always, who prepare the food, who work so quietly behind the scenes, but we feel so thankful for their service to you and all they do for us. Let's call these things as we close in the benediction.

[62 : 16] Let's call these things as we pray. Amen.