

# The First Disciples

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Go ahead and turn with me to Mark chapter 1. Begin reading this morning in verse 14. Mark chapter 1, verse 14.

Now, after John was arrested, Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, the time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand.

Repent and believe in the gospel. Verse 16. Passing alongside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, the brother of Simon, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

And Jesus said to them, Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men. And immediately they left their nets and followed him.

[ 1 : 1 8 ] And going on a little farther, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who were in their boat, mending the nets. And immediately he called to them.

And they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and followed him. Grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of God remains forever.

May God bless. Preaching and the hearing of his word this morning. When the Beatles landed on U.S. soil in the winter of 1964, they swept the nation by storm.

I wasn't there, but I know about it. Because I've read they played the Ed Sullivan Show to an audience of 73 million people. That's 10 times what the NBA Finals drew this summer.

They played to sold-out crowds in every show. And you've probably seen the picture. When they arrived in city after city, the runways were lined with adoring fans, specifically female fans, at their hairdos and just falling down, almost in worship, if we be honest, of these guys.

[ 2 : 3 6 ] And at one particular performance, after the Beatles played the rhythm guitarist, George Harrison stuck his face in the camera and said, Who are you? Where are you from? Where are you going?

Who are you? Where are you from? Where are you going? What do you want out of life? What do you want out of the next five years of your life? What do you want after those five years?

What do you want? Who are you? What do you want? In so many ways, that's a piercing question. And in fact, it's the most important question. In many ways, it's the first, the last, and the most basic question of following the Lord Jesus Christ.

You know, in the Gospel of John, it's the first question Jesus asked of his followers. And there's this wonderful little scene in John 1, when two men start following Jesus after John, John the Baptist says he's the Lamb of God.

Jesus turns around to them immediately and says, What do you want? He doesn't say, What do you know about me? He doesn't say, What do you believe about me?

[ 3 : 46 ] He says, What do you want from me? That question cuts right to the heart. In so many ways, when he says, Follow me in our verses this morning, Jesus is really saying the very same thing.

Jesus isn't calling them to believe something. He isn't calling them to make a decision about something. Jesus is calling them to want something.

Jesus is not after a group of followers who know the right things. Jesus is not even after a group of followers who believe the right things. Jesus is after a group of followers who want the right things.

And so what we're going to see is that it begins by placing everything in our lives second to Jesus Christ. So main point where we're going, you cannot be a disciple unless you give away everything to follow Jesus.

You cannot be a disciple unless you give away everything to follow Jesus Christ. We can break this out in three points. First, the time is now. The time is now.

[ 4 : 48 ] You know, so Jesus begins this. This is his first words of his public ministry, his earthly ministry. And he begins by saying the time is fulfilled. You know, translations translated in this in different ways.

Many just read the time has come. Perhaps Jesus is saying after years of being stuck away in the carpenter's shop, now he's open for business for what he really came to do.

Enough with the table. Now I've come to preach. But that doesn't capture all that's going on in this little phrase, because there's a lot of freight being carried by this phrase.

Literally, it means the time has been fulfilled. Time has been fulfilled. Now that's a strange way to talk about time. If you called your friend tonight or tomorrow and you said, the time has been fulfilled.

Now I will meet you for dinner at Pepo's or something like that. They would be sure you've lost their mind. Right? Right? No one talks like that. Jesus is saying a planned amount of time has been completed.

[ 5 : 53 ] One scholar said it like this, helps us understand why this is important. He says, The idea is not simply that an allotted time has elapsed, but that the decisive moment has now arrived.

This is a hugely important word here. This little phrase is seeking to remind us that the Lord does not live in time, and all of history and all of time unfolds according to his eternal plan.

The world does not beat to the sound of its own drum. The world unfolds in months and days and years according to the unchanging plan of God. And leading up to this point, God had worked among his people in many different ways, but now the decisive moment was arriving.

The time had been completed. The time of preparation had been completed. A new day in history and salvation has arrived. No surprise, Paul uses the same word in Galatians 4.

Look there with me. He says, But when the fullness of time had arrived, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law.

[ 7 : 02 ] There's a lot going on here, but what does this mean? You know, I think more than anything else, this little phrase means Jesus is the promised King who was to come. He is to come, but now he was to come because he has arrived, as we studied a few weeks ago, and loaded within these verses, in verses 2 and 3 and 4, John was sent to prepare the way of the Lord, and he did.

He went into the wilderness. He proclaimed a baptism of repentance and forgiveness of sins, and now the promise of Isaiah is fulfilled. He prepared the way, and now Jesus walks into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God.

What Mark is telling us is that the days of watching and waiting have been completed. The times of looking and longing have been accomplished.

That's incredible. I know we've been talking about this one fulfillment for the last four weeks or something, but in so many ways, all the preparation is over.

Listen, look at that phrase right there at the beginning of our verses. Now, after John was arrested. Now, that's very interesting. Mark wants us to see that Jesus only began preaching after John was handed over.

[ 8 : 22 ] Now, is that just kind of like a curious little anecdotal fact? I don't think so.

I think there's something really important, and it's not because Jesus can't share the stage with John. It's because John is a prophet. He tells of the one who is to come, but now that one has come.

John is of the old order. John is of the old covenant. But with the coming of Jesus, the old is gone, and behold, the new is coming.

You know, we love that verse in 2 Corinthians 5, but before that verse says anything about you, it says something radical about the new day Jesus has started, the day of salvation.

And so John must go away. That's what Mark's telling us. Incredibly loaded little phrase. And so that's huge. This is a changing of the guard. This is a new day of salvation.

[ 9 : 20 ] Years ago after college, I worked for several years on the campus of Tennessee, being evangelist to the college students there.

One thing that was always hard for college students was when their buddy got married. You know, he had a wife, and he couldn't play Fortnite anymore.

Or suddenly he had a rival for his attention. And, you know, it was just kind of one of the things he had to work through with these college students. And, you know, several years after that, I read an article that's really fascinating about the challenge.

It wasn't just a challenge for our Christian campus ministry. In fact, it was a challenge for the whole nation. There was this new phenomenon developing called a buddy moon. So before you went on your honeymoon, you had one last buddy moon.

So with your buddy, you went to Cancun or something like that one last time. To have fun with your buddy before it was over.

[ 10 : 27 ] Now, I don't know what I think about the buddy moon thing. I probably wouldn't recommend it. But there's one thing the buddy moon folks get right.

A new day is dawning. You must decrease and she must increase. The same thing's happening here.

Long ago, at many times, in many different ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets. But in these last days, he is speaking to us by the son. That's what's going on.

It's just wonderful changing of the guard. The time is now. The decisive moment has arrived. And in the plan of God, it was an ideal time for the gospel to go forward in Rome. And in the Roman Empire, as you probably know, the Roman Empire had expanded to include much of the ancient world.

It brought peace and protection to nearly the entire region around the Mediterranean and to much of three of the world's continents. And throughout this vast regions of Africans, Asians, Europeans, Arabians, and Celts, they were able to communicate because of two official languages across this vast region, Latin and Greek.

[ 11 : 42 ] And if that weren't enough, all the peace and security and protection that this empire provided, they also provided with it the most advanced transportation and communication systems of the ancient world.

They built a vast network of roads that you can still walk on that the Romans made. And even though travel was slow and dangerous, this week, I just read this, that one historian said travel was more efficient in the Roman Empire than at any time before the 1800s.

Because of the freedom to cross borders and the freedom to sin, communications. And so that travel brought communication.

So it's hard not to see the fullness of time was not just a biblical concept, but a historical concept preparing the way for the gospel. Jesus lived in a small area around Judea and spoke only Aramaic.

But after his death, his disciples walked on Roman roads to the end of the Roman Empire, proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ and writing it down in the Greek language to be sent out to all the world.

[ 12 : 48 ] Isn't that incredible? Point two, salvation is here. Salvation is here. With the very next words, Jesus announces the kingdom of God is at hand.

The kingdom of God is at hand. Time is fulfilled. And the kingdom of God is at hand. Verse 15. This word kingdom conjures up all sorts of images of kings and queens and castles and lands.

And maybe Sir Lancelot or King Arthur or Camelot or maybe more modernly, Downton Abbey or the Crown. You know, there's so many different images we have.

And the same thing happened when they heard kingdom in the ancient world. The original hearers heard this word. It conjured up different things. Living in the Roman Empire, there was only one ruler that mattered.

Caesar. Herod was close by and ruled over Judea, but he answered to Rome. So year after year after year, they were ruled by a string of foreign tyrants who lived 1,500 miles.

[ 13 : 57 ] And there was nothing they could do about it. There were no public elections. There were no systems of change. And since there was no radio or television or internet, all they heard from Rome was carried by couriers or by official delegates making announcements.

Every once in a while after an emperor would die, Rome would do its thing. The power brokers would kind of... Before the news got out, they would put another man on the throne. And then they would send officials all throughout the empire saying, good news, Tiberius is Caesar now.

And that didn't matter to the people in Jerusalem. But then Jesus arrives and says, the time has fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand.

Now imagine what it would be like in the United States if without an election or any transfer of power, someone went on to national television and said, we've got a new ruler. Ruler, from now on, you are under new government.

What would happen? Be a mess, right? Be saying, treason! You know, what does that... How can that man say that?

[ 15 : 12 ] Who does he think he is? Well, that's exactly what Jesus says right here. He says, I'm promised king. I'm the promised king. I've come to bring about the kingdom of God now.

So what could Jesus possibly mean that he came to bring about the kingdom of God? You know, even though kingdom is a rare word in the Old Testament, the people knew who the king was.

It was the Lord. And so they knew that the Lord would come again. And the prophet said when he did come again, he would ascend an earthly throne and he would save and protect his people. He would make things right.

He would set the captives free, feed the poor, establish justice. That's what godly kings do. But Jesus doesn't come bearing a sword. He comes preaching news.

So what does this mean? You know? What is Jesus's kingdom like? I mean, I think in the way he's announcing it, he is kind of resonating with people under the Roman Empire that there is good news.

[ 16 : 17 ] A new king is coming. That's why he's preaching good news. But this good news also has roots in the Old Testament. Look, and prophet Isaiah uses this word good news repeatedly.

Let's look there. He says, The spirit of the Lord is upon me because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor and the day of vengeance of our God.

This word for good news is littered throughout Isaiah, and it's the same word for good news here in Mark. And so what do you do with news is exactly what Isaiah 61 says.

You proclaim it. So he says, Bring this good news. Proclaim liberty with this good news. Proclaim the year of favor with this good news. There's a new king who is coming.

This news must get out. But interestingly, when Jesus takes up this very verse and said it's fulfilled in him, in the synagogue, he leaves out one part.

[ 17 : 20 ] If we could put that back up, Sarah. He leaves out one part in this quote. He leaves out the last phrase. And the day of vengeance of our God.

I don't think that's incidental. So Jesus leaves out this last phrase in Luke 4 to help us understand what the kingdom of God was, what kingdom he's coming to bring about. The kingdom Jesus is bringing is not about a day of vengeance, but of favor.

Not about a day of judgment, but of mercy. Not about a day of condemnation, but of salvation. The kingdom Jesus is bringing is all about good news. You know, people assume that when the Lord would arrive, it would be good for some and bad for others.

But John said God did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved for him. So the kingdom of God is the salvation open wide to sinners through Jesus Christ.

This is the gospel of God. This is the gospel. This is the good news from God about all he has done in Jesus for guilty sinners.

[ 18 : 27 ] The idea is right now that the day of vengeance is put off. The Lord is withholding judgment. The Lord is restraining wrath. The Lord is suspending punishment so that anyone who calls upon the name of the Lord might be saved from wrath right now and delivered eternally from the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his beloved son.

This is good news. This is the best news. And right here we see the difference between Christianity and every other major religion. At the core, every religion offers advice except this one.

Christianity offers news. Every other religion says this is what you have to do to get right with God, but Christianity says this is what God has done to get right with you. How do you feel when someone gives you advice, even important advice?

Like this is the score you must make on the ACT to make it to college or to get that scholarship. If you want to get promoted, these are the areas that you have to change.

If you want your child to move out of the basement before 30 years is up, this is what you must do as a parent. How do you feel when you get advice, right?

[ 19 : 48 ] You feel burdened. I mean, it might be good advice, might be helpful advice, but you feel a sense of burden, right? But how do you feel when someone shares news?

You're, you know, news like your acceptance letter came in. Your child got a job and is going off the family doll.

You know, that's a, that's a good moment. Your boss called and said, he's got a new position for you. How do you feel? You feel joy. That's the difference between advice and news.

And that's, that's packed into this word. Literally, uh, uh, uh, it's, it's, it's good news, but it, but it's news that brings joy. The, the, the, the, uh, the beginning of the word is it just, it's all about joy.

How much more than, than receiving this news that your debts have been forgiven. Your guilt has been atoned. Your shame has been removed.

[ 20 : 44 ] And there's a difference between the gospel and every other religion. So if your Christianity shares a message with you that burdens you down, it's not the Christianity of the Bible. If it tells you, you have to do these things to get right with God.

It's not news from Jesus Christ. The Bible says anyone can be reconciled to God. All you have to do is repent and believe. And that's not meant to be this kind of, it's paralyzing process.

Oh, I must repent and believe. I got to collect everything up in my life. No, the point is you just turn around and accept it. That's the free offer of the gospel.

Anyone who believes in Jesus Christ, anyone who turns from their sins and accepts him, will receive eternal life. The kingdom of God is righteousness through Jesus Christ, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Yet one day there will be a day of vengeance. Jesus will return to judge the whole world and establish his throne of righteousness and justice throughout the earth. One day his will will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

[ 21 : 54 ] One day his kingdom will come in full. But today is not that day. Until then, the kingdom right now advances through news. Jesus never calls us to take up a sword or stone to take his kingdom by force.

But to take up our mouths and proclaim it. Point three, the choice is yours, sorta. The choice is yours, sorta.

Jesus calls sinners to respond to the gospel. Right? Right there. Verse 15. Time is fulfilled. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel. The word repent, metanoia, literally means a complete change of direction in life.

But then Mark introduces us to these first disciples and the emphasis is very different. Look down there. Jesus says, follow me.

Passing on the sea of Galilee, Simon and Andrew, casting their net, their fishermen. He said, follow me and I'll make you fishers of men. Immediately they left their nets. Followed him.

[ 23 : 13 ] Verse 19. Going a little farther. He saw James and John who were in their boat mending their nets. Immediately he called to them and they left their father, Zebedee, in the boat and followed him.

Nothing in Mark's account prepares us for their response of sudden submission to Jesus. Christ. We're not told that they heard about Jesus before this.

You know, we hear about that like blind Bartimaeus, who we're introduced to in a little while. You know, he heard about Jesus. So he said, well, take me up there to see him. We're not told that.

With these first disciples. We're not told any details surrounding the moment. We're not told what they were thinking or feeling. You know, Luke and John include some of those details and it would be tempting to fill in those details right now to tell you what are in those details.

Help us understand their total submission to Jesus Christ. But bringing in the details would miss the point for Mark. Mark places the emphasis solely upon Jesus Christ. Mark places the emphasis upon this son of God who calls sinners to himself with his word.

[ 24 : 26 ] I think the idea is that he says, follow me and they follow. Like God, when he speaks, it is done. His word does not return void. By his word, he brought everything into existence.

By his word, he upholds everything in existence. By his word, he exercises rule and authority and power of dominion over everything. And everything is brought into submission to him.

In just a few verses, we'll see demons submit to his word. Diseases submit to his word. Waves submit to his word. And right here, sinners submit to his word.

The only explanation we can give or should give for their sudden, immediate, full obedience is that salvation is a work of God from beginning to end.

I think it's what is exhilarating. What happens? They immediately leave everything. Look, Mark Dever says it like this. Scripture is clear that in teaching that we are not all journeying toward God.

[ 25 : 33 ] Some having found him and others still seeking. Kind of like that bumper sticker. Not all who wander are lost. Although that's Tolkien stripped out of context. Some having found him, some others still seeking.

Instead, scripture presents us as needing to have our hearts replaced, our minds transformed, our spirits giving life. We can do none of this for ourselves.

To change each human needs, regardless of how we may outwardly appear, is so radical, so near our roots, that only God can bring it about. We need God to convert us.

I think that's the idea is that upon calling their name, follow me immediately, instantaneously and completely. The work of conversion happened at the word of God with the spirit of God for the glory of God.

The idea is Jesus is the king. You don't choose to see a king. You don't knock on the door of the castle.

[ 26 : 36 ] I want to see the king today. Put me on his agenda, on his day planner. The only way you talk to the king is if the king invites you, better yet, summons you to speak with him.

So the idea is the only way you can have a relationship with Jesus is if he calls you. So the take home for us, the takeaway for us is not will you follow Jesus?

Now, that's a great question. I'd like to ask you that question, but that's not the main takeaway this text gives us. It's not will you make a choice? I don't think that's the main takeaway.

Will you make a decision? Will you raise a hand for Christ? I don't think that's the main takeaway, but I do want to ask you two important questions as a takeaway for us. Informed by this text.

The first one is, have you left everything to follow Jesus Christ? Have you left everything? In the age of exploration, Ernest Shackleton famously was determined to reach Antarctica.

[ 27 : 42 ] I think he reached it, or at least made three voyages. He reached it, but I don't know if he reached it on each of the three times, but he needed a crew willing to endure its costly mission. So throughout the streets of London, Shackleton posted this famous announcement.

Men wanted for hazardous journey. Small wages. Bitter cold. Long months of complete darkness.

Constant danger. Safe return. Safe return. Doubtful. Honor and recognition in case of success. I'm doubting the lines were long for Mr. Shackleton's boat, but the cost of following Jesus Christ is greater.

And there's something in that call that compelled the disciples to embrace that cost. I love this.

It's just exhilarating. You know, you know, these guys just left everything immediately. And these guys were not pushovers. One thing we can say about Peter, he's not a pushover. He is very assertive.

[ 28 : 50 ] And then James and John, they're the sons of Zebedee. The sons of thunder is what Christ nicknamed them. So these are not pushy, hand paddy type of guys. These are real dudes.

These are rough dudes. And so Jesus says, follow me to Simon and Andrew. And they left their nets. And then he goes to James and John and they left their father sitting in the boat.

And if that wasn't enough, they left him with the hired hands, rubbing salt into the wound. So anyways, we need to see that Simon and Andrew left their work.

There's few things more important in our culture than career. And Jesus says, I want more priority than career. I want career second to me.

James and John left their father. There's nothing more important in a traditional culture and in the South than family. And when Jesus calls, he says, I want priority over your family.

[ 29 : 49 ] I want knowing me, loving me, serving me to be the supreme passion of your life. Everything else must be second. Jesus says some wild things when he's talking about this.

And then in Luke 14, he says, if anyone would come after me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. And we think what's going on with Jesus?

Is he mad? You know, does he have a demon like the Pharisees said? Jesus commands us to love our enemies, but hate our family? After all, the law says, honor your father and mother.

And Jesus himself chides the Pharisees for not honoring their father and mother. So what does Jesus mean? Now, Jesus is using hyperbole. But the point is clear.

You must love me so much that the love you have for anything else, your work, your plans, your spouse, your family, your life, looks like hate in comparison. Jesus is not calling us to, Jesus is calling us to hate in comparison to how much we love him.

[ 30 : 55 ] If you're following Christ, you will make decisions that look like hate to many of the people you love. And it'll look like you hate even your own life.

I mean, how could it not be that? Why else would people go to the mission field? Why else do people embrace the risk? So have you left everything?

It doesn't work to follow Jesus Christ and hold anything back. He's a jealous God. Are you willing to change things at work so your relationship with the Lord and with family doesn't suffer?

Are you willing to bring that secret sin into light so that you can live again and leave it behind? Are you willing to disappoint mom and dad if it means faithfulness to Jesus Christ?

You cannot be a disciple unless you leave everything. That's the cost. What man builds a house if he doesn't embrace the cost?



[ 32 : 13 ] Consider the cost. It's not a game. So many of you have. You have.

Second question is, have you joined him in his mission? Have you joined him in his mission? Jesus says, the disciples follow you.

I'll make you fishers of men. That's an incredible phrase. But unfortunately, we've seen it airbrushed on so many T-shirts that it means almost nothing to us. Not one that moves us.

Or at least me in a lot of ways. In the Old Testament, it's the Lord who fishes and hunts down men. The Lord says, when he's coming out of exile, I will come for my people.

I'll chase them to the highways and byways. I'll bring them to myself. They are my people. I'll hunt them down. I'm going everywhere. I'll take out anybody to bring my people home.

[ 33 : 11 ] I'm committed to my people. You will not take my people. I will do it with all my heart because they are my people. But then the Lord sends out fishermen and hunters to hunt with him, to rescue with him, to restore that brother from sin and rescue.

And this is the mission he calls Simon and Andrew and James and John into. I will make you fishers of men. You know, he's saying, I want proclaiming the gospel to be the greatest mission of your life.

I want building this kingdom to be the greatest mission of your life. And we should feel the weight of that. But first, we should say, how kind of the Lord. How kind of the Lord to call us into the mission.

No one is saved who is saved, who is not saved through the gospel preached with human words. No one is saved who is not saved through the gospel preached with human words.

All who are saved, hear it. So we don't preach the gospel and use words if necessary. Mary, the Lord wants us to go out and share. I think what Jesus would say, Mark would say, informed by these verses, what is the mission of your life?

[ 34 : 19 ] What do you really want? What do you really pray about? What do you really fight for? What do you really give to? What do you really sacrifice for? Is it your kingdom?

Is it a nice, comfortable life? Is it having friends who like you? Is it having a good job? Having debts paid? Or is it the kingdom of God? Are you using your life to build your little kingdom?

Are you using your life to build the kingdom of God? To be a fisher, to be a hunter in the image of the Father and to chase down men running and women running from Jesus Christ.

What an awesome privilege. Now that doesn't mean everybody goes to the full-time mission. I remember when I was converted in 2001.

I wanted to give my life to Christ. All my buddies, we all want to give our lives to Christ and get muddy. You can think, man, what's the point of going to work? If I'm not able to preach the gospel all day long, well, that's not the point.

[ 35 : 33 ] I think there's plenty of good to do to magnify. That's why we pray for vocation today. Because we don't want to differentiate here. I mean, you can live as a disciple.

The point is, you live sold out wherever you are. So no low-grade guilt for not being on the mission field. This place needs you to live for the kingdom just as much.

Have you given your life to do whatever you can to make much of Jesus Christ? Nancy Hasseldean's father did.

While preparing to take the gospel from America to India in 1811, Adoniram Judson met Mr. Hasseldean, met her daughter, and fell in love.

He wanted to marry her. So two months later, he asked her father the following question by mail. This is a good one for dads. I have now to ask you whether you can consent to part with your daughter early next spring.

[ 36 : 41 ] To see her no more in this world, whether you can consent to her departure and her subjection to the hardships and sufferings of a missionary life, whether you can consent to her exposure to the dangers of the ocean, to the fatal influence of the southern climate of India, to every kind of want and distress, to degradation, insult, persecution, and perhaps a violent death.

Can you consent to all this? For the sake of him who left his heavenly home and died for her and for you, for the sake of perishing immortal souls, for the sake of Zion and the glory of God.

Can you consent to all this in the hope of meeting your daughter in the world of glory? Mr. Hasseldean said yes.

Because he's a disciple. It's not because he's an incredible man. He knew that the greatest calling on his daughter's life was not his, but the Lord Jesus Christ.

You can't be a disciple unless his mission is the greatest mission of your life. Jesus is not after a group of people who know the right things. That and a bus ticket will get you a ride on a bus.

[ 38 : 01 ] Jesus is not after people who believe the right things. Jesus is after a group of people who want him, who want him, and want these things and place everything else in life second to Jesus.

You can't be a disciple unless you give away everything to him, to following him, to knowing him. Let us pray.

Father in heaven, we thank you for the privilege of opening your words and the privilege of encountering again Jesus Christ.

We pray that you would help us, God, that you would fill us with your Holy Spirit. I pray that any word that was unhelpful would be forgotten immediately. Any word that was helpful would be remembered so that we can encounter you in your word afresh and follow you with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

We praise you that this work of God that is sudden and amazing is holy of you. And we pray, God, as we leave everything and throw our hearts and our lives into the mission of following you and making much of Jesus Christ.

[ 39 : 25 ] God, help us, we pray. In Jesus' name, amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [trinitygraceathens.com](https://trinitygraceathens.com). Thank you.