

# True Disciples of Jesus Christ

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Date: 22 June 2014

[ 0 : 0 0 ] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. If you know anything about what's going on in the book of Matthew, you know that there is this great circus-like atmosphere around Jesus.

Everywhere He goes, many people are being healed, and people are being fed, and all the miracles are taking place. He can move into a town, and before the night's over, everybody in town that's sick will get healed, and God will make a difference in their life.

And so people are flocking around Jesus. And lots of people are saying, I want to follow Jesus. But they aren't really wanting to follow Jesus. They're kind of wanting to get into the hoopla.

They're kind of wanting to be big shots with Jesus. And so because He's the latest fad, because He's what's trending on Twitter, and because He's the latest Facebook picture and everything else, everybody wants to follow Jesus.

And so in this story, Jesus is going to talk to two of His guys that are saying they want to follow Him, and neither one really want to follow Him. They want to follow Him for the wrong reasons. And then He's going to put His disciples to a test.

[ 1 : 0 5 ] And I'd like to ask you to go with me through those stories and to examine yourself, evaluate you, and see where you are. So go with me, if you would, to the first one, and that's Matthew 8, verse 18.

Matthew 8, verse 18. And here you're going to find an emotional response to Christ. You're going to find some people. Here's a man who gets caught up in the moment.

Man, he's excited. He is hearing about Jesus. He is seeing all that Jesus is doing. And he's going to spring up and say, Man, I want to follow you, Jesus. But he hasn't weighed the consequences.

He hasn't thought through what he's doing. And his decision won't last. We'll never hear about this guy except this one spot where he just springs to life. And you're excited. Over the years, as a pastor, I've watched people.

I can remember this special young lady in Arequipa. She was the tallest Peruvian girl that had ever come to our church. And she came to the church. And that morning, she made a profession of faith. And she was just the bubbliest person we'd ever seen make a profession of faith.

[ 2 : 0 5 ] The whole church was excited. She made it two weeks before she quit. She made it two weeks before she went back. That's kind of the story you've got going here. So I want you to know that true salvation makes a lasting change in you.

If you understand that, say Amen. True salvation makes a lasting change. Read with me, if you would, Matthew 8, 18. Now when Jesus saw the great multitudes about him, he gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

And that will be important in a minute. Because in a minute, they're going to get in the boat and go over to the other side. Verse 19. And a certain scribe came and said unto him, Master, I will follow thee wherever you go.

No limits. I'll go wherever you go. And Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head. Father, I pray now that you would help us as we get into the Bible.

And I pray that you would wake your people up. I pray you'd help each of us to examine our salvation. I pray you'd help us to examine our following you. And I pray, dear God, that those that are in this room that aren't born again, that aren't sure they go to heaven, that today you might convict them of their sin and cause them to realize that this is a real life-changing forever decision that we make, that they should count the cost and decide you are worthy.

[ 3 : 20 ] We'll give you praise and honor and glory for all of that. In Jesus' precious name, Amen. If you would look, we have a scribe, and he is following Jesus. He has decided to follow Jesus.

This guy is a teacher, and he has graduated in the study of the law. He excitedly tells Jesus that he will become his students. Look at verse 19. He says the word master.

That word master, you've got to understand, Jesus has no formal training. He has no master of theology from a Bible college. He has no Ph.D. from somewhere else. He's just a teacher, and in human eyes, he's just a regular guy.

And this scribe who has all the degrees looks at him and says, Master, Master, you can be my teacher. I will humble myself, and I will sit at your feet. And he puts no limits on his surrender.

Look what he said in the verse. He said, Whithersoever thou goest, wherever you go, whatever you do, whatever's happening, I just surrender, and I'm going to go where you are. No limits. He seems to take no thought for the decision he's making.

[ 4 : 21 ] It's a boastful promise that he will follow Jesus. He will never stop. He's kind of like Peter. Do you remember Peter? The end of Jesus' life and ministry on earth is coming close, and Jesus is talking about how everybody's denying him.

And Peter even looks at the other apostles. He's kind of like, These other guys, they might turn on you. These other guys, they might deny you. But you know, I will never deny you. I'm the man.

You can count on me. And he ran his big mouth before he'd ever counted the cost. And so it won't be long until he's standing around a fire. Jesus has been taken in. He's being judged. And Jesus is out there.

And a little girl even asked him, Who are you, buddy? And he says, I don't know that guy. I'm not a follower of Jesus Christ. He couldn't take a stand. So many of us, real quickly, emotionally, make a decision to say that we're going to follow Jesus.

We think we would never deny him. We think we mean business. But we need to consider what's going on. The way the man responds, or the way Jesus responds to this man shows that Jesus knew he was too ready and too quick to make a decision.

[ 5 : 27 ] Because he's deciding without considering what he was doing. It's kind of like the seed that fell on stony ground and that sprang up quickly but didn't have roots. And when the sun came out, it died.

In other words, sometimes the seed of the gospel falls into what appears to be a receptive heart. But it never takes root. It never really sinks in. It never really becomes a part of that person.

They're never really born again. The sun comes out and they walk away from Jesus. You've probably met lots of people that say, I got saved. But you can tell nothing seems to have happened.

They didn't follow Jesus. It wasn't real to them. And that's apparently what's going on in this story. A superficial decision. A superficial, outward decision.

He didn't count the cost. So Jesus makes a statement to him. Verse 20. Look at it. Matthew chapter 8 verse 20. Jesus said to him, The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man have not where to lay his head.

[ 6 : 28 ] Jesus says, All the animals even have a place. They have somewhere to go. But I have nowhere. You say you'll follow me wherever I go. You're a scribe. You graduated from college.

You got your degree. You're important. People know that when they see you on the street, you understand that if you follow me tonight, we don't know where we're sleeping. Do you realize that no matter what happens in life, you said you'd follow me.

Do you mean that? Do you understand? This is kind of like a vow of poverty. It's kind of like, I don't know where I'm going. I don't know where I'm spending the night. Are you really ready for that? It's not the vow of poverty, but it was awful easy for a guy to rapidly say, I'll follow Jesus with no consideration of what was going on in his life.

Because if you follow Jesus, you're choosing to put spiritual value over earthly value. You're deciding that eternity is more important than the temporary. You're deciding that what happens in the long run is more important than what happens in the short run.

You're deciding that following Jesus is more important to you, more important to you than anything else that's going on on the planet. It means often that you'll get less of this world's goods.

[ 7 : 38 ] This guy made an ignorant promise. He had no idea of the cost that would come from following Jesus. He had no idea that what was going to happen.

He just says, Jesus, man, this is cool. Everybody's following you. Everybody's talking about you. You're out in front of everybody. I'm a graduate of the law degree here. I know the Bible. I know the Old Testament.

I will follow you and you can be my teacher. And if he'd have been a part of a regular church, we'd have looked and said, great, we're glad to have you. Sign the card, get baptized, give you a tithe. We'll be glad to have you in the church.

But Jesus seems to know there's something wrong in the guy's decision. And he looks at him and said, do you understand, buddy, that if you decide to follow me, there is no guarantee of your future. I don't even know where I'm going to spend the night tonight.

I don't know what's going to happen. Animals have a place to go. Birds have a place to go. I have nowhere even to lay down my head. So following Jesus and to serve him is to give up your comfortable life.

[ 8 : 36 ] That guy was saying, I have decided to follow Jesus. I will walk away from all that God has or all that my life has prepared for me. I will follow Jesus. And Jesus says, you said that.

Do you mean that? And I wish if you had your Bible open, you'd kind of mark it because if you go through these passages of scripture, you're going to find out that he says, I will follow thee. You're going to find that follow all through these passages of scripture.

Here's time for a self-examination. Here's time for us to look at this passage of scripture and say, where am I? And all that this chapter said, what's going on? In my personal life. Have you eagerly jumped into ministry and been excited about serving God only to fall back by the wayside?

You know, in a church like ours, where serving God is so pushed, serving God is so excited, serving God is so hyped up, where there's so many ministries around, many people will say, hey, I'm in, I'm in, I'm in, but they can't stand the course of time.

But they can't stand the course of time. Jesus said, you need to consider, you need to weigh out what you've done. Have you said you believed him as your Lord and Savior, only to turn back to the old life? Please let me explain something to you.

[ 9 : 43 ] See, the idea that you prayed a prayer and you're saved and you're saved forever is not what the Bible's teaching. So many of us, somewhere along the way, got the idea that if you go forward and pray a prayer, write your name on a card, say you join the church, if you get baptized, you're going to go to heaven when you die.

That's not what's happening. You see, it's not a real quick, hey, I will follow you no matter where you go. It is, I mean it from the bottom of my heart, I'm in. I trust Jesus. I'm coming in.

I'm serving God. This isn't a flippant decision you make. Some of us make a decision to serve God, go back on that because it wasn't real, because we didn't think about it, because we didn't weigh the cost.

And that's what happened in the story of this guy. Have you thought about being saved? Have you thought about what being saved is all about? That you could make your life more prestigious or more comfortable if you got saved?

Some people are like, well, if I join the church, if I join the church, if I get baptized, if I hang around these people, they all seem to have it all together. If I get around them, maybe that'll straighten up my life and that'll change me.

[ 10 : 46 ] That's not what salvation is about. It's about following Jesus Christ with everything that's in you. Don't make quick decisions that you not fully think out and mean.

Don't make quick decisions that you don't fully think out and mean. Have you completely chosen to follow Jesus whatever it may cost you? So before I leave this first guy, this guy is just anxious.

I mean, this guy's on the edge of his seat. This is one of those, bow your heads, pray your hair, bow your heads and pray, raise your hand if you want to get saved. Glory to God, 50 people got saved today, but none of them will ever really follow Jesus. It wasn't a sincere thing.

It wasn't from the heart. And Jesus, this is a discipleship call. And you may be thinking, this is to really be the guy that's going to be a disciple, but he already has his apostles. These are people deciding to follow Jesus.

When you decide to follow Jesus, in effect, you're saying no to your old life and yes to his life. You're saying no to sin and yes to Jesus. You're saying no to your way and yes to his way.

[ 11 : 46 ] The real problem in life is that we've all gone our own way. We've all gone our own way. It's not a certain amount of sin. It's not like, well, if I do all the, I smoke, cuss, drink, dance to go with them to do.

It's not a list of sins anybody could come up with. That's not what it is. It is. I do things my way. And a born again, Christian is going to say, I don't do things my way. I want to do what he wants me to do.

So the guy said the right words. He said, I will follow thee wherever you go. Wherever you go, Lord, I'll follow you. But he didn't really mean that. And Jesus quickly puts a quietus on that buddy.

He shuts that down when he looks at him and says, do you realize I don't even know where I'm going to spend the night? Do you realize if you follow me, we don't know where we're spending the night? Hey, I don't have high accommodations. I'm not going to the hide house tonight after the service.

We're not going to eat at the fancy restaurants. I don't know. Are you sure? And all we know about this guy is he disappeared. Never gets his story told again. Never comes to the forefront.

[ 12 : 44 ] We don't know anything about him. But he made an emotional decision. I would challenge you to realize that following Jesus Christ is not an emotional decision. It is not a getting goosebumps and feeling things.

It is a decision. I have decided to follow Jesus. Some of us jumped quicker on getting saved and quicker on making a decision like that than we ever did on getting married.

We would take much more time on getting married, which is a temporary thing that we would on thinking, man, I have decided to follow Jesus. I have decided to obey him, trust him, believe him, and give him my life.

Then you move to a second guy. The first guy makes an emotional decision. He is rashly, quickly says, I will follow Jesus. But the second guy, if you'll read the story of me in chapter 8, verse 21, he makes a selfish response to Jesus.

A selfish response to Christ. Look at verse 21. Chapter 8, verse 21. And another of his disciples said to him, Lord, suffer me first. Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father.

[ 13 : 44 ] But Jesus said to him, follow me and let the dead bury their dead. The first guy was over ready. The second guy wants Jesus to wait on him.

Following Jesus is never about meeting our needs first. If this man stays, he will please his father. If he stays, he can get his inheritance and be even more ready to follow Jesus.

Let me explain what's going on. When the guy said, hey, I'd like to follow you. Let me bury my father first. His daddy wasn't dead. If you'd ever lived in another country, if you've ever overseas, you'd realize that in most places, like, I lived in South America for years.

If you die today, we'll have you in the ground by tomorrow. We don't take time to embalm you. We just kind of clean your body up, stick you in a box. Actually, we usually close the casket and have a piece of glass to kind of keep the smell and all the stuff away.

We'll look at you for 24 hours. We'll stay with your body the whole time and then we'll bury you. That wasn't the issue here. The issue was that was a common way that men expressed, I need to take care of my family responsibilities first.

[ 14 : 52 ] I read of a missionary who was talking to a guy and the guy said, will you serve Jesus? And he said, I've got to bury my dad first. And the missionary said, oh, I'm so sorry. I didn't know he died. And the guy responded, well, he hasn't died yet, but I've got to hang around until he does.

Because it's kind of like the idea when daddy dies, I can make my own decisions. When daddy's out of the way, I can do what I feel like I ought to do and what I want to do. And so it was really, this guy was looking at Jesus and saying, I want to follow you, but my daddy needs to die first.

Give me 30 years. Give me 20 years. Give me 40 years. And whenever all that's over, I'll come and follow Jesus. Just let my dad die first. Well, Jesus sounds kind of cruel.

When you hear that story, it's kind of like, wow, the poor guy's daddy died. And Jesus said, oh, don't even go to his funeral. Let the dead bury the dead. Well, Jesus goes to funerals. It wasn't about that. Lazarus dies and Jesus goes to a funeral.

It wasn't saying, don't go to funerals. Don't dare read that passage of Scripture and go home and say, well, baby, when you die, I'm not even going to your funeral. I'm going to let the dead people bury you. That's not what that was about.

[ 15 : 54 ] It was about, who are you putting first? What's your priority? And this guy was, I want to follow you, Jesus, but put me first. I want to follow you, Jesus, put me first. If he stays home, daddy will be happy with him.

If he stays home, he'll get a bigger inheritance. If he stays home, life will be set for him because daddy will be happy. Daddy will finally die. When daddy dies, he gets to be in charge, but he may have to wait forever for that old coot to die and give him his money and he can't follow Jesus.

That's what's really going on. So Jesus said, you say you want to follow me, well, then let the dead bury their dead. Let lost people bury him. So, so many times when you and I want to follow Jesus and do something, mom and dad say to us, no, no, no, no, no.

And you're like, well, if mom and dad were not in the way, if mom and dad were dead, I might make a decision. Give me some years to let mama die and then I'll trust Jesus. And Jesus said, no, no, you make your decision now.

It's not about pleasing your mother. It's not about pleasing your dad. It's not about other people liking you. It's about you putting me first. I'm not going to bring all the verses in because we're going to get to them in Matthew, but you do know that Jesus is going to say that if you really want to be my disciple, you have to hate your mother and your brother and your dad and your own life.

[ 17 : 11 ] You have to hate all your own goods. You got to choose me above everything else. With God, with Jesus, he has to be number one. He will not come in second. He will not say to you, you know, get mama's first and daddy's second and all your retirement funds are next and then you can love Jesus.

That's simply not going to be acceptable to the Lord Jesus. So, following Jesus is never about meeting our own needs. It's not about getting your inheritance. Following Jesus means him first, not me first.

And so many Christians, and today, the popular gospel is a me first gospel. It is a prosperity gospel. It's a make me rich gospel. Following Jesus is not something you put off till tomorrow for any reason.

You don't put it off for tomorrow. You decide. I've decided to follow Jesus. The first guy acts real quickly. This guy's like, give me 30 years. You do not tell Jesus there are other things that are more important to you than his call on your life.

Jesus said, let the dead bury their dead. The dad's not dead. The idea was simply, I want to honor my dad's wishes until he dies.

[ 18 : 22 ] And then I can do what I want to do. And I will follow you. And so many of us are just like that. We are so hung up on pleasing mom, pleasing dad, and pleasing others and putting Jesus off until last.

This man just wants to meet family obligations first. But Jesus said, no, I'm first. I'm first. If you're going to follow me, I'm first.

There's some great lessons to be learned from these encounters. Following Jesus was total commitment. Total commitment. This is a radical thing.

Nobody but Jesus could ever even ask for such a thing. But he says to us, hey, I want it all. I want you 100%. This isn't like you add this on and put up with this or do a little bit of this.

It's all in. You could, you have to give up your right to comfort. You have to commit that he is greater than all other commitments. Nobody but Jesus could ever be so brash.

[ 19 : 23 ] Nobody but Jesus could ever just look at you and say, forget your mama and your daddy. Forget your money. Forget your lifestyle. Forget everything else. Put me first. Only God could talk like that.

But that's who's talking. Jesus is God in human flesh. Can you say amen right there? This is kind of rude. Let your dead bury their dead. For him, we hate our families.

For him, we give up our life and our plans. What I want's not important. What Jesus wants. Following Jesus is like giving him a blank sheet of paper. It's like reaching up to him and saying, here's a blank sheet of paper, Lord.

I've already signed it. I'll do anything you want me to do. You fill in all the details. You tell me where to live. You tell me what to do. You are my Lord and my Master. I give you every right for everything.

Following Jesus gets down to the smallest scale. He's not one of those major decisions where you say, I trusted Jesus, now I've got other things to do. I checked him off of my to-do list.

[ 20 : 19 ] He wants to be involved in everything. He's the Lord of our lives. He's everything. It's not about saying no to bad things, but even good things, I'm going to say, Lord, you're in charge.

It's loving Jesus more than anything else he has given us. It means deciding that Jesus will be the purpose and the cause of our life. One judge jumps up and says, hey, hey, this is a nice circus.

I really like this. Everybody likes you. Everybody's following you. Everybody's talking about you. You're like the greatest thing going. I'd like to get on the bandwagon. And Jesus said, I don't know where I'm spending tonight. The guy just slowly drifts back into the crowd.

The other guy comes up, say, hey, I'd like to follow you too, but I really need to please Dad first. And so, I'll drift back into the crowd also. Time for some self-examination.

Have you put other things and persons and plans above Jesus and His will for your life? This is a call for Jesus to be Lord. It's a call to say, you're number one in my life.

[ 21 : 19 ] I make decisions based on you. Have you just used Jesus as a way to better your life? How many of us, how many of us just use Jesus? I mean, it's like, I got saved so I wouldn't go to hell.

I got saved so I could have a good life. I got saved so my children wouldn't go bad. I got saved so I could keep things under control. I got saved so I'd look good. That was never the issue. Too often, churches today have turned into this like, a good morality lesson.

It's turned into, I don't want to be a fanatic for Jesus, but I just want my family to turn out right. I want to strengthen my marriage and I want to have money and I want to have a happy, comfortable life. But that was never what Jesus was about.

He was radical. He was in your face. He was let the dead bury the dead. And by the way, that is a harsh statement.

And that Jewish guy had to hear that like, you're telling me not to honor my dad? You're telling me not to respect my dad's wishes? And Jesus said, that's exactly what I'm telling you.

[ 22 : 22 ] Honor me. We're going to honor our dads. We're going to do what's right with our parents. But we're making a decision. Do you think that everything has a time and a place and God shouldn't encroach on your lifestyle?

Maybe you want to serve Him but you do not want you do not want Him adversely affecting your life. So many people that follow Jesus it's like, I love Jesus. I don't mind giving Him Sunday morning.

Fact is, I'll even give Him Sunday morning, Sunday night, and Thursday night. Fact is, I'll even give Him some time. But He ought not try to encroach. I'll give Him His time. But I mean, I've got to live my life. And this whole thing about Christ shouldn't take so much priority.

Jesus would say, oh yeah it should. I'm Jesus. I'm God. And my life is the important life. And what I want is important. Serve Jesus. So that's what's going on.

Have you surrendered your everything in you so that Jesus gets first place in every place in your life? Third story. Go with me to chapter 8 verse 23. He's going to test the disciples.

[ 23 : 23 ] And when He was entered into a ship, His disciples followed Him. And behold, there arose a great tempest, a great storm in the sea, insomuch that the ship was covered with the waves.

But He was asleep. And His disciples came to Him and awoke Him saying, Lord, save us, we perish. And He said unto them, Why are you so fearful, O ye of little faith?

Then He arose and rebuked the winds and the sea, and there was a great calm. But the men marveled saying, What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey Him?

These disciples had followed Jesus, not just talked about it. I don't know if you noticed it, but the first guy said, I will follow you. And the second guy said, Well, let me first bury my dad. And he said, No, follow me.

So Jesus is calling on them to follow Him. And then you get down to verse 23. You ought to underline it. His disciples followed Him. The first guy jumps up and said, I'll follow you. The second guy said, I'll follow you, but let me put Daddy first.

[ 24 : 21 ] Please let me take care of my stuff first. Let me take care of my stuff first. And now the disciples have followed Him and they're in the boat. They had not just talked about it. They were obeying His commands.

Go back up to Matthew 8.18. In Matthew 8.18, it says, And when Jesus saw the great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side. So you need to underline that because that comes down to the story about crossing the ocean.

Jesus said, Boys, we're going over. Boys, we're going over. That's what I want you to do. Get in the boat. We're going to the other side. And the Lord allows a great storm to come up.

It was so bad that the waves are taller than the ship. They look off the deck of that boat and they see the waves above them crashing down on the boat. These are men that are used to the water and the waves.

They're used to working on that sea and they are terrified. They literally think they're going to die. They go wake up Jesus. But Jesus says He rebukes them for being fearful.

[ 25 : 22 ] Look at that word fearful. By the way, it's not timid. It's fearful. It is a word that's always used negatively in the Bible. Fearful. He said, Why are you afraid?

Why are you fearful? How long will I have to put up with you guys and you're being so afraid? You see, being full of fear meant you're not full of faith and love.

Look at what the Bible says in 1 John 4 and verse 18. 1 John 4 and verse 18. There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear because fear hath torment.

He that feareth is not made perfect or mature in love. You haven't grown up. You haven't matured. You're still like a child. You're not learning to trust. Being fearful meant they didn't believe or understand Jesus when He said, We're going to the other side.

I give a commandment. We're going to the other side. When I teach about discipleship, I say, Always give a test. Let's see if they've learned. And so here are the disciples. Men, they have watched Him.

[ 26 : 27 ] They've watched Him work miracles. They've watched Him have power over men's lives. They've watched Him have power over everything. And then He says to them, Let's go to the other side. When they get in that boat, they know who He is.



This is the guy who can do anything. And He said, Let's go to the other side. But they're not sure about that. The waves come up. The storm comes up. And they're afraid. They didn't understand.

They didn't believe. Being fearful meant that they were worried about themselves. Like the two false disciples. They're worried about their comfort. And their security.

They thought they deserved protecting. They thought their life was worth saving. And they go wake Him up and say, Lord, You told us to go to the other side. You're asleep. You are taking a nap.

And we're about to die. Now the boat's up and down and everywhere. I really personally think Jesus is kind of sleeping like this. I think He was like, Hey guys, I told you He was going to the other side.

[ 27 : 24 ] I'm going to let this storm come up. I am God. I'm in charge. By the way, He'll prove that in just a minute. But I want to see, Do you trust me? And sometimes you're a disciple of Jesus Christ and storms come into your life and things get all topsy-turvy and upside down and things are going wrong and you love Jesus and you believe in Him and you said He was Lord and you said He could work out the details of your life and when He does and they get scared or scary, we become fearful.

We become fearful. Were they truly dead to themselves and their wishes? Would they believe that Jesus would take care of them? Do they really have a right to even think that Jesus should save their life?

They gave their lives to Him. So Jesus wakes up and they find out He is really God. Look at chapter 8 and verse 27. But the men marveled saying, What manner of man is this that even the winds and the sea obey Him?

You realize what's happening? You've got waves 40 and 50 feet high coming above their little ships out in the ocean, out in the sea there. You've got these big waves. You've got the wind blowing like crazy.

Their boat's about to turn over. Jesus is sound asleep. They go wake Jesus up and He just stands up and says, That's it! Settle down! And the wind goes bloop! And the waves go bloop! And the ship writes itself and they say, Who in the world can do that?

[ 28 : 45 ] Well, the guy you trusted. He's in charge. He can stop it all. He's in charge of the wind. He's in charge of the waves. He's in charge of the water. He's in charge of natural...

He's God. He's the one who created the world in six days. It's not hard for Him. But you see, this is like a test. It's like a test for them. Will they trust Jesus?

Will they trust Jesus? He had power to control things, even the storm. So let me give you a little self-examination time if I could. Are you following Jesus? Are you saved today?

Now listen to what I want to ask you. I don't want to know if you got baptized. I don't want to know if you filled out one of those cards. I don't want to know at the end of a service if you made a decision. I don't want to know if Mama prayed with you.

I want to know have you decided Jesus is worth your life? Are you following Jesus? Are you saying He is my Lord, He is my King, and I follow Jesus?

[ 29 : 44 ] If you're not, you're not born again. Do you look at yourself? Did you make some kind of emotional appeal that really wasn't real? Did you say I want to follow you but I got my limitations and if you want me to follow you, you've got to agree to my terms?

Or are you willing to say I trust you. A test is coming. A storm is coming. And we're going to find out and you're going to find out. But today, you can be sure that you know that you'd go to heaven.

You can be sure that you've decided to follow Jesus. That's where we are. We're at a place in our lives where we stop and say no, I really meant it. I really decided to follow Jesus. He's the Lord of my life.

I will follow Him. Are you living in obedience? You're a born again believer. He's the Lord of our lives. We want to please Him. We live for Him.

Are you learning to trust Him and all that He does in your life? That's the real hard thing. Hey, I'll follow you. Wherever you want to go, I'll follow you. Well, I don't have any place to go tonight.

[ 30 : 40 ] Oh, okay, change that. I thought maybe you knew where we were going. I thought you already had hotel reservations. I had no idea that this was going to be like that. But here's the deal.

If He's Lord, you say, I'll trust you. By the way, storms are coming for you. Something's going to happen in your family. You're going to have some health issues. You're going to have some financial issues. But if He is Lord, you can trust Him.

Your world's going to be turned upside down, every one of us. Death is going to come, knocking at the door. An accident's going to happen. Something's going to happen. And you're going to find out. But you need to know now. You need to know now.

I have trusted Jesus. I have decided to follow Jesus. I put Him first. Are you living in obedience? Are you learning to trust Him and all that He does in your life?

Do you recognize that He is God and has complete rule over your life? The world and all in it. Do you recognize that He is God? That's the story. So today, it's like a discipleship interlude in Matthew chapter 8.

[ 31 : 40 ] And it's like a time to say, God is all-powerful. He's working all these miracles. But are you following Him because of the circus? Are you following Him because it's cool? Are you following Him because that's what people expect you to do?

Or have you, from your heart, decided, I believe that Jesus is God. I believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay my sin debt. I believe that Jesus did all and all I can do is accept a free gift.

I believe God and I accept the free gift. To be honest with you, and I didn't keep approved, we never used the word Christian. We didn't even use the word saved. We always used the word believer.

And the reason was because everybody down there was a Christian. The fact is, if you would have asked a lady on the street, are you a Christian? She might have responded like this, well, what do you think? I am an animal? Because you're either a Christian or you're an animal.

Basically, that's how they felt about it. But the question would be, are you a believer? Do you believe that Jesus is God? Do you believe that Jesus died on a cross? Do you believe He died to pay your sin debt?

[ 32 : 39 ] Do you believe that He was buried and rose again? Do you trust what Jesus did to save us? There's where salvation is. But it isn't accepting Him as the Lord of your life.

It is saying, I know you're God and I come to you without reservation, without holding back. I'm trusting you. I'd like to ask you to examine your life. I'd like to ask you to examine your life before the test.

I'd like to say that you would look and say, I've been emotional, but today I'm going to make a decision. I'd like you to look and say, I have told Him that I come with selfishness and I come with these demands on Him, but today I come just as I am without anything and I trust Jesus.

He is Lord. He is God. He is Savior. And you must believe Him and you must trust Him. I challenge you to do that right now. Father in Heaven, I love you.

I thank you for the chance to be in your house with your people. And I pray that your name would be glorified and magnified. And I pray, God, you'd save somebody today. And I pray that you would work great miracles in our lives.

[ 33 : 42 ] And I pray, God, that Christians would examine themselves and if they're not believers, that today they would become a believer, a follower, someone that's trusting you. And I'll give you praise. This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia.

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