

The Cost of Discipleship

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[0 : 00] Hey guys, let's try this. Well, I'm glad everybody, I feel like one of the things I forgot last week, we were packed out, but I forgot to say that we were meeting here again this week.

And so I was like, oh man, and I hope no one went to Cyberport or one of those other places. So we're meeting here this week, okay, just so if you don't know that.

And next week we're at ISF, so the school right by Cyberport. So we won't be here next week, but we're here this week. Okay, so if you're here this week, you're in the right place, okay? You can tell what the sermon's going to be like today, right?

Hey, what I want to do is I want to bring all the kiddos down here, so we're going to dismiss the kids, but I want all the kids who are about to go off to class, can you come join me for one minute? And we're just going to pile right around here.

Hey, you. Hey, why don't you guys sit down? And I'm going to ask Aaron and I, come on, to come up here and baby Jackson, all the kiddos.

[1 : 08] And let's scoot aside, let's scoot just right there, yep. Okay, everybody here, almost?

Okay, how you guys doing? Toby, how you doing? Good. Good, okay. Okay, I have a hard question for you, a trick question. Can anybody tell me what this is?

A baby. A baby. A baby. A baby. You guys, man, you're with it this morning. Okay, so I need your help today. If you're new to Watermark or this is your 10th time but you've never seen a baby dedication, here at Watermark we dedicate babies with the hope and prayer that they would come to know the Lord at a later age and they would make a profession of faith on their own and then enter into the family.

And so dedication is a time when we bring the parents up, we ask them a lot of hard questions and then we let you see baby Jackson and we're going to pray for him and we're going to pray for everybody, okay?

Can you guys help me do that? Yeah. Yep. Okay, good. Okay, so Aaron and I and grandmother, so thank you Marie for coming all the way from, yeah.

[2 : 23] Nana. Okay, Nana. Okay, Nana. Everybody has their special names. We have a Nana too. We have a Mimi and a Nana, I think, right? Okay, so Nana, Marie, thanks for coming all the way from Arizona to be a part of this.

And so Aaron and I, I'm going to ask you the questions we ask everybody. You are so cute, dude. That brings a child here today, in coming today and bringing baby Jackson, do you, because this is your family, right?

This is your church family. And you're going to make me cry. That's good. I love it. In coming today and bringing baby Jackson, do you confess your faith and your belief in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?

And is it your desire to raise up Jackson in a home that always knows him, that always points him to Christ, filled with love and grace and God's mercy?

You will. Okay. And then I'm going to ask, can I hold on to him? Dude, you are a chunkola. Hey.

Hey. Oh. And I'm going to ask you guys, in bringing baby Jackson today, guys, this is your brother, right?

[3 : 33] This is your brother? Yeah. I'm going to ask all the church family, do you guys covet to take care of baby Jackson, to guard him, to protect him, to pray for him, that when you see him getting in trouble, which happens all the time, I know you guys never get in trouble, but when you see him get him into trouble, would you promise to gently correct him and show him the right way?

Will you guys do that? As a church family, will you do that? Say, we do? Okay. So let me pray for us. Father, we just thank you for this day. We thank you for this precious young boy, and we thank

you for this precious family, for Aaron and I, and we just pray that your blessings would be upon them.

We pray that they would know your presence, they would feel your mercy and your grace daily. We pray for Jackson, Lord, that he would come to know you at an early age, that he would do mighty things for your kingdom. And as we look at Jackson and all these other little kids around here, Lord, we just thank you that you are doing something in our midst, and you're giving us these precious, precious gifts.

I'm just mindful of so many kids you're bringing to us, even without their parents. Help the rest of us. Help the singles, and help those without kids, and help those not married, and help those married. Help us all look at these kids as our kids, and help us to be good stewards of them. So Father, we love you, and we pray these things in your son, Jesus' name, amen.

[4 : 58] Amen. Thank you, guys. Thank you. Thank you. Okay. So Watermark kids, find your teacher with your sign, and you are dismissed. We're going to turn now just to praying for Watermark, for Hong Kong, and for the world.

This is our privilege to talk to our Heavenly Father. So as we lead, just please pray along with us. Let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for being our loving Heavenly Father.

Father, we thank you so much that because of Jesus, that we as Watermark can be a family. We thank you that you've made us a family, and that we pray that you would help us to live and reflect you as the family that we are.

We pray, Lord, for our community groups, that you would help us to have Jesus right at the center of them. We pray that you would teach us how to love one another, how to serve one another, how to encourage one another, how to forgive one another, and how to point each other back to you.

We pray that you would amaze us so much by your grace, by the sacrifice that you've paid for us, that we also would be willing to lay down our lives for each other.

[6 : 14] Father, we pray that we would also be a family that looks outward to those who don't know you, that seeks to love our neighborhoods, that seeks to care for the broken, that seeks to serve the poor and reach out to those from different backgrounds, whether cultural, social, economic, or racial.

We pray that we might be a people who speak your good news to them. And Father, we pray that you might become greater in our lives, and we would become less, that we would treasure you more dearly, and that we would delight in you more fully as you lead us on this journey as a church. Thank you so much for all you've done. Thank you for all you are going to do. And we pray this in your wonderful name. Amen. And pray for Hong Kong. Our faithful Father, thank you for your mercy and grace and your love for Hong Kong.

We will sing of your love and justice. To you, Lord, we will sing praise. Let the Spirit of the Lord rest on all the saints in Hong Kong, because the Lord has anointed us to proclaim good news to the poor, to bind the brokenhearted, and to proclaim freedom for the captives.

We pray for all the saints in Hong Kong to arise and shine, for your light has come, and ask the glory of the Lord to rise upon you. Hong Kong will come to your light, and the government and leaders of Hong Kong to the brightness of your dawn.

[7 : 37] Father God, we ask for your gift-giveness, for the disobedience, the pride, and the idolatry in Hong Kong. We pray that the Spirit of God hovers over our fragrant harbor, and fill Hong Kong with the presence of your Holy Spirit.

Hong Kong, if you obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all his commands, the Lord will set you high above all the nations and all earth. All these blessings will come on you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God.

The fruit of your womb will be blessed, and the crops of your land, and the young of your livestock, the calves of your herds, and the lambs of your flocks. Your basket and your kneading trowel will be blessed. The Lord will grant the enemies who rise up against you will be defeated before you.

The Lord will send a blessing on your barns and on everything you put your hand to. The Lord your God will bless you in the land he has given you. The Lord will establish you as his holy people, as he promised you on oath, if you keep the commands of the Lord your God and walk in obedience in him.

The Lord will open the heavens and the storehouse of his bounty to send rain on your land in season and to bless all the work of your hands. We ask, Lord, that you pour out your blessings on Hong Kong, and especially on the families of those who died from the Lamb of the Fairy accident.

[8 : 42] We pray peace and love upon them and help them to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ. We lift them up to you, for you are able to do more than all we ask or imagine.

Thank you, Heavenly Father, to you and be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations forever and ever. In Jesus' almighty name we pray. We pray for the world.

Father God, we want to lift up all nations around the world. We pray for the elections in the U.S. We pray that whomever you elect to become the next president and that individual would have a Christ-like viewpoint and make godly decisions.

Father, we also ask that your hand of mercy be upon the many Christians in the U.S. who are praying for their country, praying for the nations around the world, and for the lost. Father, for China we pray for the political changeover and ask that the Holy Spirit would inspire the new leaders in China.

We pray that you would bring up leaders within the government that are followers of Christ and that through these godly leaders you form a morally courageous culture that permeates all areas of society in China. We pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are on the ground laboring for the lost in China.

[9 : 52] May your presence always be with them. Father, for Europe, even though the situation appears challenging at this time, we believe that through this your mighty hand would touch these individuals who are crying out.

And we pray, Lord, that through this time more people would find you. God, we pray for the lost sheep in the Middle East. We pray for our Jewish brothers whom you appointed to be your chosen people. We also pray for our Arab brothers as well.

Through conflict and fighting, joy, happiness, we pray that more people in the Middle East would come to know you as their Lord and Savior. Father, even though we don't have time to recite a prayer for every nation around the world, we are thankful for your provision for each country.

And we ask that you continue to bring more people around the world into the kingdom of God for your glory. We pray this in your son's name. Amen. The scripture reading today comes from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 14.

Please follow along in your bulletins. Now large crowds were going along with him. And he turned and said to them, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother, wife and children, and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple.

[11 : 06] Whoever does not carry his own cross and comes after me cannot be my disciple. For which one of you, when he wants to build a tower, does not first sit down and calculate the cost to see if he has enough to complete it?

Otherwise, when he has laid a foundation and is not able to finish, all who observe it begin to ridicule him, saying, This man began to build and was not able to finish.

Or what king, when he sets out to meet another king in battle, will not first sit down and consider whether he is strong enough with 10,000 men to encounter the one coming against him with 20,000, or else, while the other is still far away, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace. So then, none of you can be my disciples who does not give up all his own possessions. Therefore, salt is good, but even if salt has become tasteless, with what will it be seasoned?

It is useless either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. This is God's word.

[12 : 25] I'm going to do something that you're not ever supposed to do, right? So I'm going to change the teaching area just because we lost our kiddos. So if you guys are behind me, I'm going to force you to get out of your comfort zone so you can't make faces at me as I'm up here.

And we're going to continue on. How are you guys doing? This is better, I think. Hopefully I won't spit on Jason, Emily, or anybody like that.

Hey, we are in an incredibly long journey as we're looking at the book of Luke.

We are in chapter 14. I've got to be totally honest with you. As I'm doing something else you're not supposed to do is turn your back to the congregation.

I've got to be totally honest with you. I think Luke 14 is an incredibly difficult passage. It's one of those passages where you kind of feel like, should I even teach this?

[13 : 34] Because it's hard, it's difficult, and it's not necessarily fun. When people hear Luke 14, they're like, wow, Luke 15 is going to get fun.

We're going to talk about lost things and found things and things like this. So when you get to Luke 14, I think we've been at it now for four weeks. We've been on this journey for two years.

We will probably finish Luke in 2014. When you get to Luke 14, it's just, oh, wow, it's intense. I've been trying to figure out how to present it.

When I get up, every time I get up, before I get up, Christina always says to me, smile and have fun. Because she says, okay, relax a little, you're too intense. And sometimes when you get to Luke 14, I think it is a very intense passage of what God is calling us to do.

I've been praying about how to present this because I look at our world and I look at Jesus' world. I look at disciples and following Christ today and following Christ in Jesus' time.

[14:37] And I realize that even as I look at my journey, that sometimes as a church, not necessarily this church, but the church, that we tend to sugarcoat certain things as we come to church.

We sugarcoat what does it mean to walk with God. We hide things. I wouldn't necessarily say maybe it's false advertising, but maybe it's not false advertising, but it's extra.

To give you an example, I think our world is full of things like that, isn't it? Today, I take some medicine, and so I went into the cabinet because I ran out of medicine, so I went to get some new medicine.

And in the box, I opened up the medicine. And so I opened up the medicine. This was the instructions in the box. Okay, so this part right here tells you what the medicine does and how to take it and what it's made out of.

And all the rest is disclaimers. All the rest talk about here are some studies, here are some things, here are some things you might not want to do, here are some things you should do.

[15:42] And it seems like, you know, there's a lot of hidden things here. I mean, when you get that, who actually reads this? Do you read this? I don't. I start thinking, well, maybe I should start reading this because it has all these studies from Harvard and Yale and different demographics and age groups.

And it seems like there's all these hidden things, but it's all around us. You know, when you go buy that \$99 airplane ticket, and it ends up being \$300 U.S. dollars.

But online, it's advertised as \$89.95. But when you buy it, it's \$300. I kind of go, what happened there? And you go get a hotel room, and it's advertised as \$44.88.

And when you leave, it's like \$80. And when I subscribed to my telephone provider, I got the best deal I thought I could get, right? I got the best deal, and it's like, you'll never pay more.

This covers everything. But every month, my bill is different. And I'm trying to figure out what is going on there, and why is it so different? What's happening in our world?

[16:46] And we get to these stories in this passage that Christ talks about. And he's very clear about what it means to walk with him. I mean, there's no hidden agenda.

There's no fine line. There's no things that you've got to learn later on. In this Luke passage, remember, he just got out of this story. He got out of this dinner with these Pharisees, and the Pharisees tried to set him up, and he basically knew their heart.

Luke 14 is all about your heart. I mean, if you want to wonder how your heart's doing, you start reading Luke 14, and God kind of rips your chest open, and he shows you your heart.

And in Luke 14, he's at this meal, and he just goes after these Pharisees. And it always seems like every time that Jesus does that, that his crowd gets bigger. I mean, every time he goes after the authorities, more and more people follow him.

And so he gets to his place, and we read in the passage, it says a multitude is this massive number of people who are following Christ, and they want to be with him. They want to get things from him.

[17:51] They want to be an influence with him. They want food. Some of them want to be healed. Some of them want to see miracles. Some of them want power. Some of them want positions. I mean, they're all coming to Christ for different reasons.

And I thought about that. You know, I've thought, what if Jesus was beside you right now? And he turned to you, and he asked you, why are you here today? He turned to you and says, why in your business place do you call yourself a Christian?

Is there an expectation in this to get something more than me? Than Jesus.

And Jesus is incredibly bold. Because he has these massive, he has like, he has 10,000 people in a way. He has automatic church following him.

But he knows people's hearts, and he doesn't want us to get lost. He doesn't want us to make the wrong choices. He doesn't want to do these things. And so he does something that no one could ever accuse Christ of false advertising.

[19 : 06] You can never say in the Bible, well, Jesus didn't say that. Or, you know, you might say, my church didn't say that. And that is something that keeps me up late at night.

I worry about what people hear when they come away from this, and what do they think? And will someone say, well, I never heard that the gospel was the only way? But Jesus in his passages, he's very clear, and this passage is incredibly difficult.

You know that because at the end of it, he says, he who has ears to hear, let him hear. That's a Hebrew idiom. Whenever you hear that, it means the passage you just heard is incredibly difficult. It means it's not at face value. It means there's something else going on there, and you need to be careful. I've grown up my whole life, after I became a Christian, involved in communities and churches.

And really early, I had this thought in my mind that there's super Christians, and then there's normal Christians. And I've been watching those. I watched the super Christians, right?

[20 : 12] Because I was just a normal Christian. And the super Christians are the people, they come to church every Sunday. They do all the right things. They study the Bible. They serve.

They pray. They take the 2-7 classes. They take the Crusade classes. They take the BSF classes. They tithe their money. They're the super Christians. And then they're just people like me.

I'm a normal Christian. And I just come whenever it's convenient. Or I come whenever I didn't stay out too late Saturday night. Or whenever it was easy, and I always prayed.

But I usually prayed when I needed something. But in this passage, Jesus talks about discipleship, and he's basically saying there's not different levels of being a disciple of Christ.

He's saying to all of us that there's only one type of Christian. There's only one type of follower. There's not super Christians and Christians.

[21 : 10] There's not those who know the secret handshakes and know the secret books and know all the secret things. And there's not those who don't. And I worry sometimes as a church because we go on this journey.

And sometimes I get these messages from people like, I want to go into this class because I want to learn more. I want to study more. I want to get deeper. I want to learn the things that I don't know, the secret things, the hidden things. And I need to tell you that as a staff person, as elders, we don't sit back and go, okay, now this is the really good, good stuff.

This is the really hard stuff. We don't want to tell this to people until they get to this age because if we tell them and they're too young, it will freak them out. And they'll leave. But there's nothing like that in Christianity.

Christianity, I was talking to a guy who's following and he's in a cult. And he came to us and he started asking about Christianity and why is it different than what he believes.

And so as I started to talk to him, I started to say some things that were secrets within his following. And he looked at me and goes, how do you know that? Like, well, I have a friend who used to be in that kind of church and they left.

[22 : 14] And he goes, wow, they're not supposed to say those things. And we talk a little while longer and I say something a little more secret. He goes, how do you know that? That's a secret. You're not supposed to know that.

I said, well, I have a friend and he's got out of it and he's in a Christian church now and he told me all these things. But what Jesus is saying here is that there aren't any secrets. That this is what it means to follow the Lord.

I mean, he just lays it straight out. And what I want to look at this passage really briefly because we got to fly is that there, I want to see in this passage, Luke 14, 25 through 34, there's two things that we're going to learn.

I think you're going to be locked. Okay, you got it. There's two things that we're going to learn. We're going to learn these things about discipleship. We're going to learn the demands of discipleship and we're going to learn the decisions of discipleship.

The demands of discipleship are found in verses 26 and 27 and verses 33. And then we're going to look really briefly at the decisions of discipleship and see what we have to learn from that.

[23 : 12] So if you take out your bulletin and you look at verses 25, 26, and 27, and we can read that. And I think I can even read it without my glasses here. Now, the large crowds are going along with him and he turned to them and he said, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father, mother, wife, and child, and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own wife, he cannot be my disciples.

Now, the word disciple there just means follower. It's not super Christian. It's not a special Christian. It's a follower of Christ. And so Jesus lays out this demand for us as Christians.

And when, I don't know how you feel when you heard this, but when Jesus said this in his culture, everybody would have been very, very, very upset. They would have been very upset because a family was everything.

And to say you hate your family was, man, that's really hard. Now, in Hebrew and in the Bible, did Jesus mean hate your family? In Hebrew, in Scripture, and in Greek, there's two words for hate.

The first word is just you hate. Like, I hate cats. Well, I'm not, I'm just, that's an example, okay?

Don't, all you cat lovers, I have had cats and I do love cats, okay?

[24 : 26] But, so you can say I hate cats. But you can also say I hate cats when I compare my love for dogs for my love for cats.

That my love for dogs are so much greater than my love for cats that if you were to look at me, you would say that guy really hates cats. But I don't hate cats. I love cats.

But I just love dogs a lot more. And so when Jesus talks about this, he's sharing these thoughts and these ideas about family. And these, these, these ideas are all through the Bible.

We get to the story of Jacob. And Jacob is working seven years to get a wife. And when it's come time to get the wife from the father, the father tricks him and he gives him Leah. Now, Leah, we're told is weak, has weak eyes.

In Hebrew, it actually means she's not very attractive. But, but, but Jacob marries her and he works another seven years for Rachel. And so we're told in this passage that Jacob looks at them and he loves both of them, but he, he loves Rachel and he hates Leah.

[25 : 31] And what we're told there is when you compare Jacob's love for Rachel, it's, it's so much more than his love for Leah. And Jesus says to you and me as followers of Christ, as followers of him, that that's how our love should be for everybody else.

That's how our love should be when we compare our love for God, for our love for our family and our friends and our family. In the church, that our love for God should be so huge, so massive.

That everybody to look at will say, wow, he, they really hate, hate those other things. My friend, Francie, when I was in high school, she was Jewish. And she came to know the Lord.

And we're in youth group and she said, I really feel like I need to get baptized in obedience to God. Will you pray for me? And so our whole youth group prayed for her for a long time because her father was a well-known businessman in Montgomery.

And so it came down to the time where she went to share with him because she was going to be baptized that Sunday. And she went to her daddy and she said, Daddy, I'm going to get baptized because I'll become a Christian.

[26 : 37] And the dad's response immediately was, what have I done? How can you hate your mother and me so much?

How can you do that? How can you just despise us so much? And Francie goes, I don't despise you. I love you. But I love Jesus more.

And so she went ahead and she got baptized. And that Sunday afternoon when she came home, she walked in the front door and the pictures of the kids were on the table and her picture was face down. Which meant that her father, in his eyes, that she was dead.

That she no longer existed. And for as long as I remember when I walk into their house, her picture is face down. And Jesus says, your love for me should be so great, so intense, so massive that it pales your love for everybody else.

Again, when they heard this, they would have been freaking out. Because a family was responsible for your status. A family was responsible for your security. You know, you didn't really worry about your money.

[27 : 50] You worried more about your family in Jewish days. Because through your family, you had security. Your family was responsible for your salvation. You were a child of Abraham. Through your family, you became saved.

It was everything. And Jesus looks at them and he looks at us and he says, hey, you cannot depend on your family. You can't depend on them for your status. You can't depend on them for your security.

You can't depend on them for your salvation. You have to depend on me totally. That is what it means to be a disciple of Jesus. That's what it means to be a follower of Christ. You have to love me and your love for me in comparison to everybody else has to look like hate.

A disciple, a Christian, is one who follows Christ and is totally dependent upon him. So the question for us today is what are we dependent on? Be honest.

What are you depending on in your life? What is there in your life that if it was taken away that your life would fall apart? Is it your reputation? Is it your job?

[28 : 57] Is it your family? Is it your health? Is it your kiddos? What is it that if it was taken away that you would crumble? And if it's not God, then we need to recheck our hearts, Jesus says.

Does that make sense? So a question would be like this. What does it look like for me to love Jesus more than my parents? What does it look like for me to love Jesus more than my family?

What does it look like for me to love Jesus more than my job? What does it look like for me to love Jesus more than my stuff? What does it look like for me to love Jesus more than everything else?

I don't know how you answered that. But this passage beckons us, it begs us, it tells us that as Christ's followers, we have to answer that.

He who has ears, let him hear. And the demands for following Christ are huge. The demands are you have to love God more than everything else. In verse 27, he gives another demand, and this demand is incredibly hard.

[30 : 11] When everybody in Jesus' congregation following him, it says about 20,000 people were following him, when they heard him say that you have to pick up your cross and carry it, everybody would have went, because the cross was terrible.

No one wanted to see the cross. The cross was a death sentence. The cross, if you carried the cross, there was only one outcome. The minute you picked up that beam, you were stripped naked, and you were walked through your city or village, and you were totally humiliated.

And carrying that cross meant that you were under judgment, you were under submission to the authority, and that there was only one outcome that was going to happen with that cross. No one picked up the cross, and as they're walking to Calvary, you say, oh, this is uncomfortable.

I can't do this. Sorry, I'll see you later. And Jesus says for us as followers of him that when we come to him, we need to pick up the cross and follow him.

Everybody would have been freaking out. And what Jesus is saying to them, and what he's saying to us is that you need to understand, and you need to identify with me and who I am, and you need to realize that I've taken the cross for you, that I've died on Calvary for you, and that you need to walk with me.

[31 : 29] You realize that your acceptance is based on Jesus and nothing else. You realize that because of what Jesus has done, you have nothing to prove. You realize that what Jesus has done, that you have nothing to lose.

To take up the cross meant to totally identify with Jesus and his death and resurrection. So when we do baptisms, we see buried in Christ's death, resurrected in Christ's life.

It's his total symbolism. It's his idea of identifying with Christ in everything we do. So again, Jesus gives us this demand. We're following him. So what does it look like for you to take up your cross at your work tomorrow?

He who has ears, let him hear. What does it look like for you to identify with Christ and to take up your cross and to love Jesus more when you go to your next family reunion? Then everybody's mocking you because you're a Christian.

What does it look like to take up the cross, to follow Christ, to love him more when you go to the ceremony and you're sweeping the tombs? What has Christ called you to do?

[32 : 46] How are you to love him more when that happens? What does it look like to love Christ, to take up the cross when you went into your office and your boss is a total jerk? What does it look like to love God more than your job?

And what does it look like to take up that cross and to hold it in front of your boss and to identify so completely with Jesus and everything that he's done? What does that look like for us? I don't know what it looks like for you.

I don't know what it might look like. What does it look like when you walk into your marriage and you... I think the kids are gone. You haven't had sex like in two years because your wife hates you and you've been treating her like crap.

And so every time you think, well, let's spend some time together, she's like, no way. There's no way I'm going to do it. You don't deserve that. What does it look like as a man when you do that? Or what does it look like as a woman when you're looking like and your husband's been treating you like crap for two years and he wants to... In my family, we say, get busy. He wants to get busy with you. We'll erase it from the tape.

[33 : 53] And you're like, there's just no way I want to do that. There's just no way I want to give myself to that person. There's just no way I want to love that person. There's no way I want to care for my husband because he's been treating me terribly.

What does it look like to do that? Because in all those settings, Jesus says that we have a responsibility to him. And the responsibility is to walk with him, to love him, and to point people to him and to realize that he's in control of all those things.

So we have the demands. The demands are to love your neighbor and love everything else less than you love. Love God, love God for everything. The second one is demand, is to pick up your cross and carry it. And then the passage says that we have a couple decisions we have to make. A couple decisions. And you see that in there. He gives these two stories. The first story is of a guy who's building this tower. Now everybody would have caught on to this.

Everybody would have understood what he was saying because they're being built everywhere. The second story was of this king who's about to go to war. And all of these stories have layers upon layers of meaning and understanding to everybody in Jesus' audience.

[34 : 59] Two years before Jesus shared this, this huge coliseum collapsed and over 50,000 people were killed. That year that Jesus shares this, King Herod went to war with a king that he should have beat, but he got destroyed and made a laughing stock and a mocking stock of everybody around the Middle East.

And so the minute Jesus shared this, everybody would have connected with this and understood what was going on. And what you see about these stories is within these stories, these guys had decisions. They had decisions. They were free to choose or not to choose.

They needed to count the cost. They needed to understand what they were going to do. Did they have the resources to do that? That they needed to spend careful time reflecting. Is this is what God wants me to do? They needed to understand that if they didn't do it, if they started it and they stopped, that they would look really bad and be ridiculed.

And the master's name would be shamed. And Jesus is warning them, he's warning us as we look at this process, as we make these decisions, as we walk with him, that counting the cost is everything.

We're not going to ever do this, hey, if you want to know Christ, come on, now's the time, come on down. Because sometimes people just get caught up in emotions and they just, they go with their emotions.

[36 : 11] But we want you to understand as a church that it's a massive choice and responsibility that you're making. But it will affect everything that you do as you follow God.

And we're called to do that and realize that as we choose him, it's going to affect everything. It's going to affect our family, our job, our security, our egos, our new homes, all of these things. And if there's anything in front of us that says, I can't do that.

Because if I did this, my family would disown me. Then what the passage says is that you're a disciple of your family. Because we're all disciples of something.

We're all followers of something. If you come to this point and you say, well, I just can't do that because I like the money, I like the lifestyle. Christianity doesn't say that you have to be poor. You don't, you know, there's all these things in there that there is a responsibility for all those things. But if you say, I can't do that because I like the lifestyle, I'm saying, then what you're saying is, I don't want to be a disciple of Christ. I want to be a disciple of my lifestyle. Or my work. Or my wife.

[37 : 19] Or my kids. And so Jesus is saying here to everyone and to you and I, be really careful of what you're a disciple of because what you're a disciple of, that's going to enamor you, that's going to control you, that's going to be everything.

You see how easy this is? You see how hard it is? Man, I'm like, again, you're hearing it for 10 minutes and you're going to go home and you're going to forget about it. But I've been thinking about this for like four months.

And I still realize how bad and how poor of a follower of Christ I am. I want to share with you three really quick points that have been coming into my head over and over and over and then we're finished.

When you came in, you had a cross on your chair. My hope is that you pick that up right now and you hold that because we're going to do something with it. Hopefully your kids didn't take it away. They're spread everywhere. Here's what I want us to think. Here's what I've been learning. Here's three ideas that have been going through my head over and over and over again. Number one, this passage tells us that Jesus wants us to be aware of being a Christian.

[38 : 34] There's a huge cost. That there's a cost of following Jesus and it's not the cost of being a disciple because the word in Hebrew and in Greek is the same word and it just means being a follower.

And so Jesus wants us to know that there's this massive cost of following him. The cost is really high. Again, he tells his crowd and it's probably the last thing you do as a pastor because what you would probably do when you had a crowd of 20,000 people is you'd have a barbecue and you'd tell really nice jokes and you would say, hey, if you want to be a good Christian, you do these three things and at the end of these three things, God's going to bless you and your life's going to be great and you're going to get a Rolex and all these great things and that's what the Christian life is all about, right?

But Jesus says no. And Jesus wants us to know. He doesn't want to false advertise and we as a church don't want to false advertise. We want you to know that there's this incredibly high cost for following him and all the crowd didn't realize that and in football terms, what we call is a gut check. It's like your opponents are about to score. You can do it in rugby and in soccer and you're the defense and this is where you figure out what you're made of and you're like, okay, now we got to stop these guys and so Jesus says, this is what it means.

It means here's the cross. I got to follow the cross. I got to be identified with Christ. When I go out to the emperor club and all my friends are getting drunk and playing with the women, what does it look like for me to identify with Christ there?

[39 : 58] When I go out and everybody's cheating on their receipts and sheets to put in for per diem and things like that and they're making a lot of money and I have these choices, what am I going to do there? What does it look like for me?

This is a gut check time. Am I going to falsely advertise who I am and what I do or am I going to follow Christ and say this is what it means to be enamored with Jesus and love with him more than the money that I get from my per diem and identify with him as I carry my cross?

Jesus doesn't have false advertising. The second thing that I've been learning is that when we choose to follow Christ, we really have to contemplate what that means. I mean, there's things that we need to consider.

There's all these other options we can do. We can become a Buddhist. We can become a Hindu. We can become a materialist. We can become an atheist. We can become an agnostic. I would encourage you to look at all those views and see what do they do?

How do they view man? What is the problem of man? Is there a God? Why do we need to come to God? How does God relate to us? All of these things, if you're an adult and you're in this age and you're struggling through these things, please, please look at those things and read those things and talk to people who are Christians and see where their hope is found and see if their life, see if their life is different.

[41 : 17] I have so many friends and acquaintances who've given up on Christianity because the life of the people that they were around were no different than the life of everybody else and they just realized, why can't I just be like everybody else?

It's because the Christians around me aren't living like that. And Jesus says, you need to be careful before you make these choices. You need to understand what it costs to follow Christ and when you follow him and you say, I'm going to follow him, you move towards him very deliberately.

That's why baptism is the first thing that Christians do because it's a step of taking this step of faith and saying, this is who I am, this is who I'm being identified with, and this is why I need Jesus desperately and I want to give him everything.

And Jesus is saying here, be careful. I'm not preaching to you guys, I'm preaching to me. Jesus said, be careful, Tobin, because you can fool yourself.

You can say you've given everything to Christ, but what you really mean is you've given everything to him that you feel comfortable giving to him. But there's other things you don't want to give to him yet.

[42 : 27] Be careful. Examine your hearts. Ask God what's going on there and try to figure out what's happening there.

And finally, this is, I've been praying about how to say this, I don't know how to say this. This is what I would say to myself. This passage, I think, teaches us over and over that Christ is not looking for people who have the right stuff.

Christ, when he yells this out to everybody around him, he's not looking at, I'm looking for super Christians. If you're a super Christian, will you follow me? He's not saying that.

I mean, I think in the stories and in the passages and you read other parts of scripture, it's really clear that everybody who comes to Christ doesn't have the right stuff. They know that they need God.

And it's not just they need God for salvation, they need God for every day of their life. So don't enter into a Bible study and say, I want to get smarter, I want to get stronger, I want to get all this information, I want to get all these things so that I can be the type of Christian that God wants me to be.

[43 : 47] The Pharisees had all that down. But they're exactly the opposite of what Christ wanted them to be. Am I saying Bible studies are bad?

No. Am I saying discipleship is bad? No, I'm not. I think all those things are great. We do them here. We're going to encourage you to do them. But we want you to understand that it doesn't make you a better Christian. It doesn't make you holy.

It doesn't make God more happy with you. And I think it's a church, the church, universal church, we've really done a terrible job with this. But what Jesus wants to do, guys, is he wants us to take us to a place where we understand how desperately we need him.

When Gideon went to battle, he had a lot of men. He was going to fight 30,000 men.

Do you know how many men God left him with to fight 30,000 men? 300. Why do you think God did that? Because God wanted Gideon to realize that he desperately, desperately needs Jesus.

[45 : 00] I think what Jesus is trying to share us in this passage is that none of us have the resources to walk with him. None of us have the resources to be a good Christian.

None of us. And none of us are going to get those resources no matter how hard you work, no matter how hard you study, no matter how devoted you are, no matter how much you pray. Those things cannot come in and of yourself.

Jesus is saying that this passage starts and begins with this idea and I think that's why he says you have to hate these things because he's trying to knock away everything that we're going to rely on. Knock away your family, knock away your money, knock away your status. Finally, he says, knock away yourself. Why does he do that? Does he hate those things? No. He wants us to realize how desperately we need him.

As we walk with him, he's the only choice, he's the only hope and if we don't have him, we're lost. Jesus isn't trying to get us passionate and on fire and doing these retreats and we come back and say, okay, I'm ready to do everything.

[46 : 10] Jesus wants us to get to a place where we say, man, this stuff is incredibly hard. He who has ears, let him hear. There's no way I can do these things on my own.

He who has ears, let him hear. I desperately need God in my life. If I'm going to make it, if I'm going to be the type of person that God wants me to be, God is going to have to do it through me. I'm going to have to surrender my life to him.

I'm going to have to say, God, I cannot do these things. I cannot be a follower or a disciple or the way this scripture says, I need you. And that's what Jesus is saying.

Let me say it one other way and we'll close. I think that sometimes for me, I want to train myself up. I want to take all the courses. I want to get all the knowledge. I want to do all these things. I want to get the skill and the ability so that I can be the type of person that God wants me to be. And then I come to a passage which is the most basic passage of discipleship.

[47 : 14] Love the Lord your God with all your heart, mind, soul, and body. Love your neighbor as yourself. I've been a Christian for 28 years.

38 years. How am I doing in that passage? How am I doing with loving the Lord your God with all my heart, mind, soul, and body and loving my neighbor as myself?

I've done all the studies. I've done all the curriculum. How are you guys doing with that commandment? That commandment is so huge and heavy that if you try to pick it up, it'll crush you. Jesus says, to be my disciple, to walk with me, to follow me, that you surrender your life to me. You trust me. I'm good. I want your best. I'm there. I'm walking with you.

You're right, Tobin. You're never going to have the power. You're never going to have the knowledge. You're never going to be at that place where you've arrived and you are the super Christian. Don't ever fool yourself in thinking that. But there's one standard for all of us.

[48 : 26] As we walk on a journey as a church, as we trust the Lord, as we walk with him, we realize that the key to discipleship is not knowledge and growth and learning Greek and Hebrew, but the key to walking with God, the key to being a Christ follower is dependence.

dependence. So my question for us today as a church and as individuals is how dependent are we on Jesus?

What does it look like for us to really depend on him? What does it look like for us to really trust him? What does it look like for us to understand that without him, we can do none of these things? We are nothing. Nothing. Nothing. I love how the passage ends and we don't have time for it, but he talks about salt.

And salt is amazing in Eastern, Middle Eastern terminology. It has so many purposes, but one of the big purposes is it gives flavor and it gives life. The other thing I think is interesting about salt is it only takes a little salt.

And sometimes we think we need this massive amount of salt. We need these huge churches. We need all these things to make a difference. But guys, in the history of the world, large churches and large congregations have done very little for the call of Christ.

[49 : 44] What's changed the world, what's changed people's lives, what's started revivals are a few individuals who are very salty and they understand that as a disciple they can't do anything unless they depend on Christ, unless they trust him.

Giving you this cross is not expensive. My prayer for you is that you would carry it in your pocket this week and that you would do a little exercise with you as you walk into your work.

Maybe touch it or hold it or look at it. Before you walk into your office this Monday, say, what does it look like for me to carry the cross of Christ here? What does it look like when things get really difficult?

What does it look like when everybody's getting fired? What does it look like when everybody is biting each other's backs and there's a lot of power plays going on? What does it look like for me to carry the cross of Christ?

What does it look like for me to be salt? What does it look like for me to love God more than anything else? When you go home tonight and you're walking into a family that maybe is hostile or indifferent to the call of Christ, remember this cross and ask the question, God, what does it look like for me to be here?

[51 : 09] What does it look like for me to honor you? What does it look like for me to trust you? What does it look like for me to be salt and light here? And realize that God doesn't want you to be a super Christian there.

What you need to say right after you say that is you need to say, God, I realize I cannot do that. Will you do that through me? God, I realize I can't be the father that you want me to be.

Would you do that through me? God, I can't be the husband or wife that you want me to be. Will you do that through me? I know that I'm called to be here. I know I'm called to be salt. I know I'm called to be light. I know I'm called to carry a cross.

I know I'm called to love you more than all these other things. I can't. But you can. Will you do that through me?

Jesus calls this mass of people together and he basically says this is the essence of being a Christian. Not a super Christian. Not a disciple disciple.

[52 : 20] But a Christian. A Christian is a person who loves the Lord their God with all their heart, mind, soul, and body who loves God more than their neighbor, their family, their friends.

What does it mean to love? It means to think less of them compared to your love for God. I asked Kip last night. I read the passage to my son, 10 years old. I probably should have just said that because it would have been the whole sermon.

I said, Kip, what does this mean? He goes, don't put anything before God. I'm like, you're right. So what happens if I put you before God?

He goes, well, ultimately you're not going to treat me very well. because you're going to expect things from me that only God can give you. That's pretty good for a 10-year-old, isn't it?

I have him preach the next sermon. God has called all of us here at Watermark to be his followers and his disciples.

[53 : 22] He's called every one of us here to love him more than other things in our life. He's called every one of us in here to walk in the shadow of the cross and identify with him so closely and so perfectly that we walk and when God looks at us, he sees Jesus.

And as he shares those with us, he says, you're right, it's impossible to be my disciple. You have to depend on me. He who has ears let him hear.

Father, we thank you for this day. We thank you for your goodness in our life. We thank you that your mercy that is new every morning. We thank you that you put these passages in us and you show us and you laugh when we first start to understand them and get our hold on them because they always come out centered on me and centered on Tobin and centered on what Tobin needs to do and centered on how well Tobin does and how well we do as a church and you look at us and you say, no, no, no, no.

It's about me. It's about Jesus. It's not about your church. It's about Christ. No, no, it's not about you doing all these things well and doing them great.

That's great unless you do them in your own power. Lord, I pray even as I know now there are some people here who have no idea what I just said and I pray that you would open their hearts and their minds and their eyes to your son Jesus Christ and just as we walk in faith as his disciples I pray that they would walk in faith as his new children.

[55 : 04] Help them, Lord, not to leave here without asking questions and to ask questions of me and the others around here or the people that brought them. Lord, I know there are some of us in here right now who have been living a life that is so self-centered and yet we claim to be Christians.

Lord, I just repent and I confess that in my life and in the life of my brothers and sisters here. Lord, change us. Show us.

Don't let us go to sleep tonight without understanding how much you love us, how much you care for us, how much you want the best for us and that best centers upon us being dependent on you and not on ourselves.

So Lord, we come before you and we are needy and we are hurting and we are broken and we are not super and I don't feel super but I feel loved and I feel your grace and I understand how amazing you are because you don't give up on any of us.

and so we come before you and we just worship you. May you change us. May you change this church. May you change these community groups. May you change this city as we just walk with you in dependence and trust you to be God.

[56 : 31] Father, we love you and we pray these things in your son Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Hey, next week we are not here.

We're at ISF, okay? So make sure you go there and so we're kind of traveling as nomads, you know, and we did that for the first 10 years at Island ECC and we're doing that for the first two years so you can always pray for us as leaders trying to figure out what to do and we have a couple videos.

So Millen, you're going to show videos that say better than I do. Please be seated. Okay, so you heard the most important videos. It's a, every day, every Sunday before, even on Saturday night, a group of us are in here setting up and so it just doesn't happen.

You know, it's not like a little fairy goes doop and it pops up here like that. So we need your help if you want to serve in that way. Community groups have been serving in that way and so if you're interested in learning the technical side of everything and how to use all these things, please contact Millen.

The Marriage, Love and Respect course actually started last Tuesday but we're at a place where we can still invite a couple more couples. It was actually, I thought it was great. Married 15 years and it's one of the best ones we've ever done, right?

[57 : 43] And so that was, so please sign up on the table out here. Also on November 1st, so that last week of October, a guy kind of mentored me and we were talking about the Israel trip, Dr. Hannah, John Hannah and his wife are going to be here and that Thursday night, November 1st, Colin, write this down for your wife.

Okay, we're having a date night. So it's anybody, everybody, Aaron, everybody, all the guys, we need help and so it's November 1st, it's at the Cricket Club, it's an all-you-can-eat meal, there's a program involved about marriage and Hannah's been married for over 30 years and talking about raising kids and it's going to be a fun time so we want to encourage you to do that.

That's actually me dancing and Christina, that's, yeah. Anyway, so it's going to be a great night. It's one of those money-back guarantee things. If you come and you don't feel like this really built into us, then we'll give you your money back, okay?

Seriously. Okay, and the final thing is just the cross. I didn't give it to you just so to give you something but I really want us this week as a church to come before the Lord and say, what does it look like for me to hold this cross up in my work?

What does it look like for me to hold this cross up in my marriage, to sacrificially give to people around me? What does it look like for me to love God more?

[59 : 07] And I think that's very comforting, right? It's like Kip said, if Christina loved me more than she loved God, I would be terrified. I feel very comforting to know that she loves God more than she loves me because she's going to do the right thing if she loves God.

She's not if she loves me more, right? What does it mean for us to love God as we walk around Hong Kong this week? By the way, we thank you for this day.

We thank you for my brothers and sisters here. We thank you for your word even though it was incredibly challenging in chapter 14 where we pray that we would never not look at our hearts.

We would never not examine our motives. We would never not examine our love for you and our service to those around us. And so on this journey, we just thank you that you take us baby step, baby step, baby step, baby step.

You're not asking us to be perfect. You're not asking us to be super. You're just asking us to surrender to you and baby step, baby step, baby step. He who has ears, let him hear.

[60 : 16] Lord, we love you. We pray these things in your son Jesus' name. Amen. God bless you. We'll see you next week at ISF. Take care. Thank you.