

Mark 1:16-20: The Calling of the Disciples

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- [0 : 0 0] And by the way, we are very happy to have the kids in the church service with us. Sometimes that doesn't always reciprocate. Sometimes the kids prefer the Marvis' class. But we love it when kids are here, and that's always an option. So we have the children's church class right after the announcements that's available. But sometimes parents want their kids to stay in church with them, and that is awesome as well. Even if they make noises every once in a while, which kids tend to do. In fact, we had Adam this morning, my littlest. He's a year and a half old. And he was making all kinds of noise. I don't know if you noticed that, Ron, but he was giving you amens like every few minutes. And so that's perfectly awesome. Sometimes the kids will play underneath the chairs, color on things. And you know what? That doesn't bother me at all. I don't know if it bothers you. I love it. And so I'm kind of used to a house full of kids and noises, and so I get a little nervous when it's too quiet.
- [1 : 0 5] So I'm going to give a few more announcements here. Let me see if I can pull these things up. We've got lots of things going on. One of the things is with the fair. So we had some sign-ups to do the fair at the Clark County, and I got an email last week. I think it was on a Friday, anyway, recently that said we don't have any indoor booths available. And so I think it might be too tough to do an outdoor booth in July. So I followed up with Champaign County. We've actually done their fair before, and they sent me a contract to sign, so it looks like that might be available. One thing I didn't follow up with, and I don't know if anybody remembers from a few years ago when we did that. Did they have air conditioning in there? No, they don't. So anyway, I figured let's maybe the elders meet after the service, and we'll talk it through and see if that's something that we want to do. That one's in August, I believe. So we'll talk that through and see if we can actually do a fair this year. There's also in June, so coming up next month, a Berean Bible Conference that is a church over in Tip City.
- [2 : 2 4] That'll be, I think, four days or so. And so it'll be a great conference. We have some brochures out there on one of the tables. Check that out. And also, we are going to do a family conference here at this church in September, I think. Yeah, September. I don't have any brochures ready yet, but I just wanted to put that out there. I don't have the date on hand, but it's somewhere towards the end of September. It's just a one-day thing. I guess it's more than one day. It'll be a Friday night, a Saturday, and then it'll kind of go into Sunday morning. So that morning, expect to have a lot of people here at the church, if we have a good turnout. But anybody know Tim Board? He's come here and spoken before. He's the director of development, I think it's called, at the mission organization, Things to Come. And him and I work together to plan that, and there's lots of people who are excited to come here and talk about Christian family stuff. So I'm looking forward to that.

- [3 : 33] Okay, another thing here. Let's see if I have this. Here we go. You'll notice out on this table, as soon as you go out that door, the table that's decorated with Easter stuff, you'll see a pile of these things.
- And it looks like money, right? It doesn't look like American money. American money's not very, well, it looks nice. I think it looks nicer. But if you go to England, this is a British pound, or at least it looks like one.
- They're a lot more colorful. We just like our greenbacks here in the U.S. But this is a million-pound note, which doesn't actually exist.
- But this is actually a gospel tract. So it just has a message about the gospel. And it's got a picture of King Charles. And there's something going on this weekend, or this, yeah, I guess it's this weekend, right?
- It's a three-day event. Sarah Davis was telling me about it. And said that there's this ministry, Living Waters, that made tracks specific to this event. And so it's kind of on the top of people's minds.
- [4 : 43] People might see on TV or YouTube or whatever in the news that King Charles is getting coronated. And there's a lot that goes on with that. There's a lot of pomp and circumstance.
- And so with this being on top of people's minds, or many people, I don't know. Did anybody else know about this? Okay. So maybe the top of half of our minds. Yeah.
- Yeah. So, by the way, I took, me and the boys were out in the woods for the last three days. We just got back yesterday. So if there was anything going on in the world, we had no cell service.
- We didn't know about it, which was really nice, actually. But it's got a short gospel message on the back, pointing people to Christ and using this coronation ceremony.
- Because there's a lot of Christian aspects to it. I heard that they're actually not going to broadcast some of the more Christian aspects. And I'm not sure what's kind of going on with that.
- [5 : 42] But I think this will be something that might catch people's attention because of what's going on. So if you would, if you're willing, grab 10 or 20 of these and just give them away this week.
- Find opportunities. It can be something as easy as going to a parking lot when you're at the restaurant after church service and just putting them on people's windshield, you know, tuck them in underneath the windshield wiper.
- Or you can hand them to people and say, hey, did you get a million pounds, you know, a million British pounds? And just give it to them.
- And, you know, you don't have to, you can start, you can use it to start a conversation or you could just let the tract speak for itself. So there's lots of opportunities to do that, but it'll probably lose its impact after a couple of weeks.
- So let's try to just get rid of them. I think we got about 400 of them. And so take about 10 or 20 and try to pass them out in the next week. All right.
- [6 : 43] What else do we got here? All right. I have, this is, this is something that I'm really excited about.
- So we have, I don't know if any, anyone has noticed, but there's been a little bit of a budding romance at the church and we actually have an engagement to announce here at the church.
- church, Sarah Davis and Jeremy Paradise have gotten engaged and are planning to get married sometime soonish.

You guys want to stand up or is that, is that too much? So congratulate them and after the service and they can tell you all about it, I guess.

But I'm super excited and I know they are as well. But I wanted to make sure that everybody knew about that because you might, you know, notice, you know, some different jewelry on the hand and all that kind of thing and wonder what's going on there.

[7 : 57] All right. Let's see. Just one last thing. And this is, I hate to talk about this, but I think it's important. One of the things that, that happened this last week and it happened in Xenia. We actually used to live in Xenia.

We currently live in Cedarville down in Greene County. And one of the things that was in the news this week is there was several incidents at the YMCA in Xenia.

I'm not sure. Maybe I'll ask after how many people have heard of this. But there were some women who went into the dressing room at the YMCA in Xenia and found that there was a man in there. Exposed.

We'll just put it at that. And so they went to the front desk or whatever and asked about it. And they said, well, our policy is, you know, we'll allow whatever people identify as.

And, you know, I'm sure we're familiar with that kind of stuff that's going on today. And then at least one of them, I think several of them, called the police, which is appropriate when you see something like that.

[9 : 02] The restrooms are meant to be for the boys, the boys' room, and you got the girls' room. And that's the same thing with any locker rooms or dressing rooms. That's the way that it ought to be for privacy's sake.

But we have people that don't know right from wrong today. Anyway, this went through the courts. And just this last week, the judge ruled. In fact, he actually mocked and ridiculed that this was even brought to the police, that this is just something that people should deal with.

And so, just as a, you know, a warning, you know, we have to be careful when it comes to matters of safety, especially if you're a parent.

So if you, and from what I understand, this is not just something at a single YMCA. This is something that is across the board. And I'm sure there may be people in here that have memberships there.

But as far as a warning of what they allow in their facility. And also, what's that?

[10 : 10] Yeah, that's an option. And, you know, I think it's up to each individual. That might be something that you might do in protest or even just for safety sake. But it's a pretty messed up thing.

And so, you know, when it comes to safety, we just have to be on guard and extra vigilant in the day in which we live. You know, when we go to a restaurant and one of the kids has to go to the bathroom, you know, they don't go by themselves.

They either go with a buddy or mom and dad. And that's just how things work. And sometimes it's really annoying. Because sometimes, especially when you have seven kids, that happens five times during your meal.

But that's what it takes, you know. If that's what it takes to make sure that our kids are safe, then that's what we're going to do. So anyway, we'll leave that with that.

I do want to make sure I try to take questions at the end of the service today. So as we go through the book of Mark, if there's questions, I didn't take questions last week. So if there's questions or comments from last week or this week, write them down and we'll give some time to take those.

[11 : 25] All right, we're ready to jump into the book of Mark here. We're still in chapter one. And last week, we talked about the temptation of Jesus.

Let me pull up my notes here. And then we talked about not just the temptation of Jesus, but also his message.

That his message was to preach the gospel of the kingdom. He said the kingdom of God is at hand. And he was telling people that you need to repent, which means turn.

Turn towards God and believe that message. Believe the gospel. Today, we're going to look at two things. One, when Jesus calls his very first disciples.

And then also when he goes to a synagogue to teach. It seems like for the very first time, at least this is the first account of him going to teach in a synagogue in the book of Mark.

[12 : 29] So let's start. We're going to go to Mark chapter one, if you have a Bible. And we're going to start with verse 16. And as he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and Andrew, his brother, casting a net into the sea, for they were fishermen.

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

And when he had gone a little further from there, he saw James, the son of Zebedee, and John, his brother, who also were in the boat, mending their nets. And immediately he called to them and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired servants and they went after him.

So this is two sets of brothers. Four of Jesus' first disciples, two sets of brothers. And one of the interesting things I note is that you read through this.

It's like, here comes, it seems some stranger and he just calls out to these guys in a boat and says, come follow me. And they just drop everything and follow him.

[13 : 37] Well, what in the world is going on with that? You know, if you were off doing your job somewhere, you know, whatever that job is, and somebody just came by and said, hey, follow me. Would you just drop everything and follow after some stranger?

I wouldn't. So, but I think it's important to note that even, you know, we have somewhat of an abbreviated account here of what was going on during this time period.

But it seems that these brothers, or at least Andrew and Peter, they already knew who Jesus was. In fact, let's go, we're going to turn to the book of John.

And this is sometimes helpful when you're going through one of the Gospels is to compare and contrast and look at what's in a different Gospel.

There's actually, and I think I've mentioned this a few weeks ago, a kind of Bible you can get called a parallel Bible. And it will actually take things like the four Gospels and it will put them all together so you can kind of compare and contrast through the whole timeline.

[14 : 45] So, let's see. John chapter 1, verse 35, gives this account. Again, the next day, John stood with his disciples.

Now, what John is this? This is John the Baptist, who we just read about and looked at a few weeks ago, who was out there baptizing. And he was calling all of Israel to come out. They were to be baptized in water by him.

And he was calling them to repent, to turn back to God. A lot of people knew who John was. And John had his own disciples, people that followed him. Verse 36, And looking at Jesus as he walked, he said, Behold, the Lamb of God.

This is John speaking. Behold, this is the Lamb of God. The two disciples heard him speak. And they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned and seeing them, following, said to them, What do you seek?

And they said to him, Rabbi, which to say when translated is teacher. Where are you staying? And he said to them, Come and see. And they came and they saw where he was staying and remained with him that day.

[15 : 53] Now, it was about the tenth hour. One of the two who heard John speak and followed him. So this is one of John's disciples who was standing there with John and heard John call out, This is the Lamb of God.

And ended up following Jesus. His name was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother, Simon, Simon Peter, and said to him, We have found the Messiah, which is translated Christ.

So Messiah and Christ, the same word. Messiah is the Hebrew. Christ is the Greek. And he brought him to Jesus. Now, when Jesus looked at him, he said, You are Simon, the son of Jonah.

You shall be called Cephas, which is translated a stone. And so this is, from what we can tell, the first encounter that Andrew and then his brother Peter had with Jesus.

But this is a different time from what we just read in Mark. This goes back to when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist.

[17 : 03] And so what it appears like, what it looks like, is that Andrew and his brother Simon Peter were introduced to the message, or to the ministry, I'll say, of Jesus during John the Baptist's ministry.

And Andrew, at least, was a disciple of John the Baptist. And decided, hey, this guy is the Lamb of God. And from what it looks like, he's the Messiah that the prophets have spoken of for a thousand years.

And so, this is the guy I want to be following. But, you know, there were lots of rabbis at the time. And if you wanted to follow a rabbi, you didn't just start following him around.

You had to get the rabbi's permission. It wasn't up to you, whether you were going to be a disciple or a follower of the rabbi. It was up to the rabbi. And so, even though they followed Jesus that one day and said, well, where are you staying?

And I want to find out more about you and what you're doing. And Jesus had a brief discussion with them. It seems they went back to their jobs as fishermen and their businesses. But they knew, as we saw with the conversation that Andrew had with his brother, he said, I'm pretty sure, Peter, that guy, the Messiah that the scriptures have told us about, I think this is the guy.

[18 : 33] I think this is him. And so, when Jesus came on that day and he called out to them as they were fishing and said, hey, you, come follow me, they were ready.

They were ready. This is the guy I want to be following. I'm willing to do whatever to follow him. This is the one that the prophets have spoken of for a long time.

There's another point that I wanted to make. It's interesting that there's two sets of brothers here. And let's see, who is it? It's Andrew and Peter.

And then the sons of Zebedee are James and John, sometimes called the sons of thunder. But it's interesting that Jesus would call these two sets of brothers.

And I think it speaks to, because, you know, I think there was some amount of faithfulness among these disciples for Jesus to call them to follow him.

[19 : 35] And that kind of speaks to, I think, the parents, right, the parents that raised these boys to be faithful to God's word, to be expectant of the Messiah.

And it wasn't just one young man. It was two young men. We really don't know how old these brothers were. But they were both excited, both Andrew and his brother Peter.

They were both excited about this potential Messiah that had come. And, you know, I think about my relationship with my siblings.

And we have, over the years, encouraged each other in the Lord. And I think about times where my brother or my sister, my parents have encouraged me in the Lord.

And what an opportunity there is among siblings, when you have brothers and sisters, to be encouraging to one another to follow the Lord.

[20 : 39] And you see that a lot in faithful families. The next thing I want to look at is, what did Jesus ask of these guys, these four brothers?

He said, follow me. Follow me. What does that mean? What does it mean to follow me? Well, in one place, Jesus said to somebody, follow me.

Or somebody said, well, I want to follow you. He says, well, do you know what that means, following me? He said, it means you won't have any place to lay your head. He says, foxes, they have their dens.

But the Son of Man, He doesn't have any place to lay down. I don't have a house to live in. I'm just going around all of Israel here to preach, to teach.

To proclaim the kingdom of God. And so if you want to follow me, that's the life that you're going to live. There's a Greek word for follow. I won't get into what the actual Greek word is.

[21 : 40] But what it means is, it means to accompany me. So follow. It actually means, I want you to get out of the boat, and we're going to go traveling together throughout Israel.

That's what it means. And there's going to be, you know, probably dangers along the way. We're going to be traveling probably along desolated roads. There might be robbers. We're going to, sometimes we're not going to have a house to stay in.

There might be, and we see throughout the Gospels that sometimes people put up Jesus and his disciples, but other times they just slept outside. I was able to appreciate that more as we slept outside, under a pretty nice tent, actually, and a very nice warm sleeping bag.

I don't know that Jesus and his disciples had those kinds of luxuries that we had. But that's what it meant to follow Jesus. And their job was to learn from him, so to walk with him, and he would teach them.

And then they would help Jesus to proclaim this message of the kingdom, that the kingdom of God is at hand, and call people to turn back to God in preparation for this kingdom that was coming.

[22 : 57] It's important to note that Jesus was not calling these disciples to become Christians, to become believers. believers. They already were believers, weren't they?

I'm sure all the disciples had already been baptized by John, this baptism of repentance that was important back then. Some people think that baptism in water is so important today, and we've talked about that.

But back then, that's what God was calling people to do, to go through this water ritual. They had done that, and they believed that he was the Messiah. They were already believers.

So when Jesus called them to follow him, he wasn't saying, I want you to be a believer in me. That's not what it was. But in kind of today's Christian language, a lot of people have become uncomfortable with just saying, I'm a Christian.

Because I guess there's kind of baggage with that. You know, sometimes Christians are hypocrites. Sometimes Christians do things that, you know, that maybe God wouldn't approve of or that we wouldn't approve of.

[24 : 04] Sometimes people are just embarrassed by what Christians do. Sometimes, even though it's good, right, people are embarrassed. Well, so, but I've noticed kind of this trend.

People don't want to call themselves Christians. And Christian, actually, when it talks about the first time that believers were called Christians, I believe it was Antioch. Anybody want to fact check me on that? I didn't write it down.

I think it was in Antioch where they were first called Christians. And Christian just means a little Christ. That's all it means. And it was actually a derogatory terminology for these people who, you know, these people who believe that Jesus rose from the dead and all this nonsense.

And so these people, they're just these little Christ. And so that's what we're going to call them. And just like we see with many other things, you know, among conservative circles, we call ourselves the deplorables, right?

Because, you know, somebody called, you know, these conservatives deplorables. And so, well, we'll just own that as a badge of honor. And so Christian just means little Christ.

[25 : 19] And Christian is actually a very biblical word. It's the word that's used for believers in Jesus throughout the scriptures. So I think it's appropriate to use the term Christian.

But there might be, I think there can be confusion involved when we call a Christian or a believer a follower of Christ. I think we should be followers of Christ.

But I think we need to make an important distinction in how we're following Christ. The way that these disciples were doing it is very different from what God calls us to do today.

He called them to go walking through Israel. And we don't need to go walking through Israel. He called them to preach the gospel of the kingdom, the kingdom of God, God's kingdom where he'll establish a throne in the nation of Israel, in Jerusalem, with a descendant of David to rule over not just Jerusalem, not just Israel, but over all the world.

That's one of the messages that they were preaching. And while we do believe that that's going to happen one day, that's not the important message that we are to bring to people today.

[26 : 35] We have a different message, and we're preaching the cross of Christ. And that hadn't happened yet, so that message wasn't available to these guys at that time. But that's the message that we want to preach and should preach.

But people will look at the different things. When Jesus asked people to follow him, there were different things that Jesus asked them to do.

In Mark 8, verse 34, Jesus says, You must deny yourself and take up your cross to follow me. Well, what does that mean?

Deny yourself? What does that mean? Take up your cross? A cross back then, everybody knew what a cross was. That was what they executed people on. Well, what does that mean? And Jesus told the rich young ruler, he said, I want you to sell everything that you have.

This guy had a lot of money. Sell everything and come follow me. Well, is that something I should do if I want to be a follower of Jesus? Do I need to sell everything?

[27 : 38] Do I need to sell everything? In another place in Matthew 8, verse 21 and 22, there were some people that Jesus asked to come follow me.

And they said, Well, I'll do it, but first, I need to go bury my parents or my father or something like that. And Jesus said, Never mind, don't worry about it.

If you want to follow me, you let the dead bury their own dead, and you come follow me right now. Well, that's kind of shocking, right? I mean, to be a follower of Jesus, I'm not allowed to even honor my parents through a decent burial?

Israel? Is that what we are calling people to when we call them to Christ? It's not. There was something very specific going on.

We need to understand the context. The age in which this was happening, time was of the essence. There wasn't time to go bury your parents. The kingdom of God is happening soon.

[28 : 44] And we need to get the word out. We need all of Israel to know. We don't have time for all those things. We don't have time to earn a living, to leave an inheritance to your children. You need to quit your job.

Let your dad, you know, when his servants finish, you know, do the fishing business. You need to come with me. We have an important task at hand. But people have, because they don't understand the context of these things, have made a big deal about, well, if you want to be a real Christian, if you want to be a real follower of Christ, these are all the things you have to do.

You have to sell your belongings. Or, what you usually hear is, you have to be willing to sell all your belongings. In order to be a real Christian.

There's a book written back in the 19, well, I didn't write it down. I think in the 1940s. Maybe, I think it was the 30s. Late 1930s. By a guy named Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

Has anybody heard of Dietrich Bonhoeffer? Yeah. He's actually a hero. Dietrich Bonhoeffer lived in Germany. He was a German. He was a Lutheran pastor in Germany during the time of the rise of the Nazis and World War II.

[30 : 05] And he was fed up with all the laxity, the lack of passion, the religiosity in the church, in his church, in the Lutheran church, which was the predominant denomination of that time.

And I think still is in Germany. That's the land of Luther. And that's where Lutheranism comes from. From Martin Luther. And so he wrote this book, The Cost of Discipleship.

And in it, he goes after these churches that have compromised in so many ways. And it become more just religious institutions and not people who are passionate about the things of God.

And I'm sure there was a ton to criticize. You had this ruler, this tyrannical, murderous ruler who was coming up through the ranks and began to rule.

And for the most part, the German church was silent about a lot of these horrible things that were happening. And so there was lots of things to criticize. But in writing this book, he goes back to, well, what is it to be a true follower of Jesus?

[31 : 17] And he points to many of these things. And he criticizes the church. And really, he wants to add the threat, right?

You know, if you want to be a real, true Christian, you'll do all these things. I have a couple of quotes here. And this one's, I think, the most famous. And he used the term cheap grace. He said, Cheap grace is the preaching of forgiveness without requiring repentance.

It's baptism without church discipline. It's communion without confession. Cheap grace is grace without discipleship. Grace without the cross.

Grace without Jesus Christ, living and incarnate. And I think there's some very true things in there. Is there any grace without the cross?

There isn't. But what you see a lot of times in older denominations, as they age, is it just becomes a bunch of religious rituals. And the cross, what Jesus accomplished, just kind of disappears.

[32 : 25] And all it is is, well, just trying to live a good life and, you know, do these religious rituals and get together. It's kind of a community club. And I'm sure those were the kinds of things happening.

Here's another quote. The price we are having to pay today in the shape of the collapse of the organized church is only the inevitable consequence of our policy of making grace available to all at too low a cost.

We gave away the word and sacraments wholesale. We baptized, we confirmed, and absolved a whole nation without condition. Our humanitarian sentiment made us give that which was holy to the scornful and unbelieving.

But the call to follow Jesus in the narrow way was hardly ever heard. So that really gets into the title of his book, The Cost of Discipleship.

We just gave away God's grace for free and we didn't require anything of these people. And that's the problem. And that is poison. Even though many of the things that he taught was true and the church was compromised, but to say that the grace of God costs something is completely to undermine the word of God.

[33 : 45] The grace of God that he has given us through the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ comes at zero cost to us. When he was talking about the cost of discipleship, he was talking about the cost that it takes us as the disciples to follow Jesus and we need to pay the price.

And you know what that means if we have to pay a price? It means that what Jesus did on the cross was insufficient. He paid part of the price and now we have to pay some more.

We have to pay the extra. The part that he did not supply. And that is a toxic lie. Jesus, as the song says, Jesus paid it all.

The whole thing. And he offers his grace for nothing. Even if you're a loser who can't seem to make your way through life.

If you can't do all these things, these heroic things that even Bonifat himself did, for struggling to live the Christian life the way that we ought to live.

[34 : 58] There certainly is a pattern in the Bible for how we ought to live as Christians. But that's not tied to God's grace. God's grace, his gift, is completely and totally free.

So there have been, you know, this was written in the 1930s. And again, Dietrich Bonhoeffer was a hero. In fact, I encourage people to read about his life story. Ultimately, if you don't know about his life, he worked to undermine what the Nazis were doing and actually worked with spies to try to assassinate Hitler.

And that's a whole other question. Should Christians be involved in war and all that kind of thing? That's time for another maybe message. But he was ultimately found out, captured, imprisoned, and then I can't remember but I think it was weeks before the war ended, before the Allies kind of won the war, he was executed and gave up his life in trying to do what was right.

And so he really was a hero. But sometimes heroes make mistakes and write books that are damaging in certain ways. So, anyway, I didn't want to completely disparage Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

I think he was a hero in many ways. But I think it's important to be able to be discerning in those types of things. There are books today, in like the last ten years, that have basically many of the same kind of ideas or messages and I wanted to talk about a couple of them.

[36 : 35] There's a book that came out probably a dozen years ago called Radical written by a guy named David Platt. Really popular. You can find him a lot on YouTube and podcasts and all these types of things.

Currently pastoring out in Washington, D.C. He wrote a book called Radical. And I actually haven't read the book but I did listen to a series of messages he did on the same topic on the radio, on Moody Bible Radio actually.

And a lot of these same things pointing to all these things that we must do in order to be true. If you want to be a real disciple. And all these things do is, you know, I might think, you know, when people are kind of not living the Christian life they should, we want to call them out on it, you know, and encourage people to actually live better.

And that is sometimes appropriate, right? Sometimes people need encouragement to live a more godly life. but we should never, ever, ever, ever tie that to their salvation.

And when we do that, we ruin the whole salvation project that's taught in the Bible. So one of the things I found interesting as I was reading, or not reading, I was listening to this series of messages, was he was talking about all these things that you must do based on what Jesus told his disciples that they must do.

[38 : 01] And through it all, I mean, some of these things were really difficult. Sell everything that you have. And there were, there was a time that I was listening that he, he questioned, he said, you know, sometimes I wonder if I'm really a true Christian myself.

And I thought, if you're not sure, why are you on the radio trying to teach us how to do it? Right? The whole, one of the whole reasons for the gospel message, the gospel of grace, is that we would know, that we would know that we are saved.

We know that we have peace with God. But when you tie your salvation to, well, am I doing enough? Can you ever really know?

You can't. I'm never doing enough. And one of the reasons in Ephesians, it talks about why, one of the reasons why God gave us this gift of grace, this free gift of grace, he said, so that no one can boast.

That's easy to do, right? I mean, I think Dietrich Bonhoeffer had reasons to boast. I mean, that guy was a brave, courageous hero. But when he stands before God and God asks him, why should I let you into heaven?

[39 : 26] if he points to, well, because I was a courageous hero and I fought the Nazis, that's not the right answer. It's because of what Jesus Christ did for me.

Another book was called Crazy Love, and it's a book I actually read. In fact, I brought it with me. And I'm somewhat reticent to kind of criticize, but I think it's important in certain circumstances, especially when it comes to law and grace.

And so, this book Crazy Love, super popular, very, very popular. And written by Francis Chan, who, again, is very popular. But as I read through this book, I was just blown away by all the legalism.

And when you don't rightly divide Scripture, and you take things that were in the Gospels that really just applied to that time, it was an urgent time when things were happening, and there was a call to do things with urgency.

And, you know, with our Christian lives, we should be bold Christians, and we should try to serve God to the best of our ability, but in Jesus' times, there was three years to get all this done.

[40 : 43] For us, we have a whole lifetime, and we need to plot along in a sustainable way. And in this book, he praises people who, they sold their house, they sold their house so that they could give the money to the poor, and so that they could serve Jesus.

Now, in and of itself, that's not wrong. It's not wrong to sell your house and give the money to something good. That's not wrong at all. But it may be foolish, right?

It may be a foolish thing to do. And there's lots of, I've heard many stories of people who have tried to do these things that really is unique to that era, and then they end up living an ineffective Christian life because they didn't do the things that they should.

They didn't, you know, work a job to make a living and build a sustainable lifestyle for them and their family. And so, just one little quote from this book.

And one little story to point out. He said, As I said before, my wife's grandma Clara offered a real-life example of a person who was consumed with Jesus.

[42 : 04] I once attended a play with my wife and some of her relatives, including grandma Clara. During intermission, I leaned over and I asked what she thought of the play.

And she said, Oh, honey, I really don't want to be here right now. When I asked why, she replied, I just don't know if this is where I want to be when Christ returns. I'd rather be helping someone or on my knees praying.

I don't want him to return and find me sitting in a theater. father. And, of course, he goes on to say, you know, what an amazing thing that was, a heart of passion towards Jesus.

And on the surface, it really looks like that. But you know what? And I can actually point to some scriptures in the gospel where Jesus talks about being ready, you know, when he comes.

You know, you don't need to always be ready. But, you know, it's perfectly fine and normal to enjoy a theater production.

[43 : 14] You know, to go to the movies. Now, are there plenty of rotten, filthy movies that we don't want to put in front of our eyes? Absolutely. But to enjoy a good film with a good message or something like that, that's part of living a good life?

It is. And so, we shouldn't, there's too many opportunities to what? Make ourselves feel like we're better.

We're more holy. We're more dedicated to God. You know, if Jesus returns, and he will.

The Bible says it. He's going to return with the sound of a trumpet. And you're sitting in the theater watching the Mario Brothers. Is that going to have an impact on whether you're going up or not?

Absolutely not. Absolutely not. And so, anyway, I just, I thought it was important to point out some of the things in the current culture.

[44 : 23] Now, you know, we see Jesus called his disciples to follow him. And we kind of made a contrast here. Well, following Jesus is different.

We're not following Jesus around Israel. We're not doing some of the same things that Jesus asked. But there are other calls to follow Jesus in the epistles of Paul, which are more of our instructions.

These are, these were instructions written after the cross and regarding the cross and how we're to live as Christians in light of the cross and what Jesus did for us. And in some translations, the word follow is used.

I read from the New King James usually. And so, but there's another phrase, very similar, but Paul says in many cases, imitate me or imitate Christ.

It's a different word. Imitate. And in some places it's translated follow. And it kind of means the same thing, right? And that is true. Ephesians 5, 1 and 2 says this.

[45 : 31] Paul says, therefore be imitators of God as dear children and walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given himself for us on offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma.

Be imitators of God. Is he saying if you want to really be a true Christian, if you want to really be saved, then you'll imitate God. Is that what he's saying?

No, he's saying you are believers. You're trusting in Christ. We can have confidence in him. We can have confidence that we have eternal life, that we're going to heaven. And in light of what Christ did for you, let's imitate him.

Let's live our lives in in a way that is imitating him, that's like what he did. In the same way that he sacrificed his life for us, we can sacrifice, we can lay down our lives for other people.

He says in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, 1, he says imitate me just as I also imitate Christ. He says use me for an example. Look at my, I'm laying my life down for people just like Jesus laid his life down.

[46 : 41] And you know what you should do as a believer, as a Christian, you should lay down your life for others as well. That's how we ought to live our lives. And then in Philippians chapter 2, it's all about let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, you know, who was willing, it says just to summarize, who was willing to leave the glory that he had in heaven, to come down and become like us and lay down his life for us.

Let that mind, the mind that he had when he did that for us, let's live out our lives as Christians with the same attitude, with the same love. And that is how we ought to live the Christian life.

But there's a risk, right? There's a risk when you say, well, you're secure in your faith, but we ought to live a certain way.

And we want to add more weight to it, right? And we want to say, well, if we tell people that they have eternal security, that they have eternal life without doing these things, they might not do them.

And so we want to add more weight to it. We want to put more things behind it. You have to do these things, and then you'll get eternal life. Or maybe, and then you can be sure you have eternal life. But that's not what God's word teaches us.

[48 : 06] His word teaches us that the gift is for free. And as we can rest in Him, the security, with peace. That was one of Paul's messages whenever he writes a letter.

He starts it off with, grace and peace to you. Those of us trusting in Christ, we have peace in our lives. We don't have to worry and be in fear.

Well, am I doing everything that I have to do in order to make it? There's nothing to do. And so when we have peace with God, we can fellowship with Him and have a life where we just enjoy Him.

And when we do that, when we live out that Christian life, being close with Him, it'll change us from the inside out. And we'll start to find ourselves actually living more like Jesus.

The other thing I wanted to point out with this passage, and I think we'll wrap up with this, is He was calling these disciples to be fishers of men. He said, come follow me, and here's the job description.

[49 : 23] I'm going to make you a fisherman. You're fishing for fish right now. These four brothers, they were all fishermen. But I want you to come with me, and we're going to have a different aim, a different target.

Instead of fishing for fish, we're going to go after men. That's what Jesus did with His disciples. They went all around Israel talking to people, trying to convince people, turn towards God.

Would you turn towards God? God. And in that day, turning towards God meant specific things. After the cross, it means a little bit of a different thing. We're still turning towards God, but turning towards God through the cross rather than through the law.

But it's still turned towards God. And that's what God wants from all of us, that we would be fishers of men. And it points to something, that God loves people.

That was the whole mission that Jesus came for. He came for people. He didn't come to show how awesome He was.

[50 : 32] In fact, He lived a pretty humble life. He did some pretty cool things, you know, healed some people and did other miracles. Turned water into wine. That's pretty thrilling. But He lived a fairly humble life.

He didn't come to earth to show how amazing He was. He came to earth to give His life as a ransom for many. To die for all the good people, for all the ones who were going after Him, for all the ones who were praying every day.

He came down to go after all the ones who were doing all their religious duties. He says, no, I didn't come for for the healthy.

I came for the sick. To call sinners to repentance. Those whose lives are messed up. And not just because of other people, but whose lives are messed up because of themselves.

I came to save them from their sins. We told that story last week about D.L. Moody. And if you weren't here, I'll just go over it real quick.

[51 : 45] D.L. Moody invited, or there was a young man, a young preacher who came to D.L. Moody's church. D.L. Moody was a pastor back 100 years ago in Chicago. And a young man came to him.

I guess he had met him before. But he showed up at his church and he said, hey, I'm here. Will you let me preach at your church? And typically, if you're a pastor of a church and you meet somebody you don't really know him, you're going to say, no, I don't know who you are.

But this kid was really persistent and he said, all right, fine. I'll let you preach one night. And he told his elders, if he does okay, you can let him preach some more. And then he went off and traveled.

Then he came back and he asked his wife and he said, so, darling, you know, this young preacher, you know, how'd he do? And she said, actually, he's pretty good. He preaches a little bit different from you, but I think he does a great job.

He's teaching the people from John 3.16 that God so loved the world that he gave his only son that whosoever should believe in him should not perish but have everlasting life.

[52 : 49] He's teaching the people that God loves sinners. And D.O. Moody said, well, that's not true. He said, I've got to go listen to this guy.

So he goes and he hears this young man. I think he was 17 years old. I don't know if I wrote it down. Some people were asking me last week who that was. It wasn't, well, anyway, I didn't recognize the name of the guy.

But anyway, he listens to his message and he hears several messages over several nights. And they're all based on the text of John 3.16. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son.

Whosoever believed in him shall not perish but have eternal life. And then he'd go to the beginning and show how God loved sinners. Adam and Eve, they sinned against him. He showed him love.

He wanted them to come back to him. All throughout the Bible, sinners, sinners, sinners, people doing all kinds of evil things and turning against him. And again and again. Now there's some judgment thrown in there, right?

[53 : 52] But ultimately, what does he say is the purpose of judgment? I'm trying to bring these people back to me. I'm trying to bring these people back to me. I want them for myself. And so after listening to this guy, he said, you know what?

I've had a change of heart. And this is a quote from this book. I think it was a biographical sketch from one of his son-in-laws, I think.

I used to preach that God was behind the sinner with a double-edged sword ready to cue him down. And I'm all finished with that. I preach now that God is behind the sinner with love.

And the sinner is running away from the God of love. Not running away from a God who is angry, though he has lots of reason to be.

But a God who's willing to lay down even his life, to become a man and experience death for us. And so Moody's heart and his mind was changed to see that God loves sinners.

[55 : 07] And that's the message that Jesus wanted of these disciples. Come follow me. We're going to go around. It's going to be hard. But I think it'll be worth it. We're going to go around.

We're going to talk to people. Most people are going to reject our message. They're not going to be interested. They're going to be busy. And when we go out, we pass out these tracts. Most people will throw them in the trash.

They will. They're not interested. I've got my own life to live. I've got things that I'm doing. But the most important thing in the whole world is eternal life.

Our soul. One of the things that Jesus taught in the scriptures was, you know, if your hand, he taught, if your hand causes you to sin, you should cut it off.

Well, that sounds pretty gruesome. If your eye causes you to sin, you should gouge it out. And he was using very powerful imagery. And I don't think he was, I think he was not being totally literal.

[56 : 12] He was using hyperbole, exaggeration, to make a point. And the point was, and this is what he said, it's better for you to go into eternal life without your hand, without your eye, than to spend eternity in hell apart from God with your whole body intact.

But so many people are more interested in this life. And they're just, they'll just completely neglect the next one. Which we can enjoy even now.

So I'll end with that and just say, you know, if that's not something that you have ever done. Jesus offers again, what's the cost? What's the cost of being a follower of Jesus after the cross?

Nothing. It's completely free. Now, sometimes I will say there's a little cost. It's a cost to your pride. Sometimes that can feel like a heavy cost, right?

We just have to humble ourselves. Say, you know what? I do need Jesus. You know what? I am a sinner. I didn't realize it before, but I really am.

[57 : 28] That's all there is to it. Humble yourself and trust in Him. Amen? All right. Let's take some questions, comments. Isabella, are you going to be our mic runner?

I did have one comment last week that I thought I'd share. We had talked about, what was it? Temptation. And Jesus was tempted by Satan in the wilderness.

And so, you know, sometimes I think people get the idea that all temptation comes from Satan or maybe from evil spirits. And we'll actually talk about evil spirits next week. But the Bible says, specifically in James, that temptation comes from our own desires.

You know, we have our own desires, God-given desires, but we corrupt them. We pass a boundary line where we have, you know, desires for good food or, you know, for the romantic desires.

But then we take those past the boundaries of what is healthy and good. And we end up hurting ourselves and hurting others. And that's what sin is. So somebody came up to me the other day and said, you know, I found myself in the past, you know, saying, if there's a temptation in my head that's just kind of, sometimes temptations are fleeting.

[58 : 44] You just got this little idea in your head. Well, I could do this. And it would make my life a whole lot easier. But then you're like, you know, it doesn't stick. And then there's some temptations.

And we've all experienced this. And the temptation sticks. And it tries to stay in our head. It doesn't seem like it wants to go away. And so in that conversation, I think the response was, well, get behind me, Satan.

And that's biblical, right? That's what Jesus said. And he actually said that to somebody. He said that to Peter. Get behind me, Satan. And I don't think that's necessarily wrong. I mean, I think Satan is a figurehead for evil.

And it's sometimes appropriate to use him as a figurehead for all temptation. I don't think it's wrong. I wouldn't criticize somebody at all about that. But you could say, you know, you could talk to yourself and say, you crazy mind, you know.

Stop thinking that. But really, I think one of the things in the Bible that the Bible teaches is set your minds on things that are pure. Usually the best way to get something out of your mind is to think on something else.

[59 : 51] Right? And so somebody, people will give this example. Don't think about pink elephants. If you tell somebody that, what are they going to do?

They're going to think for hours about pink elephants, right? So usually the best way to get something out of your mind is to set your minds on things that are pure, on things that are virtuous.

That's what Paul talks about in Philippians somewhere. Any comments or questions? Thoughts? Isabella, she's ready to go.

She's like... That's okay if we don't. I'm okay with a fairly short, awkward silence.

Going once. Twice.

[60 : 55] All right, we'll finish that. We'll close with a word of prayer. Father, we love you. Teach us to live by grace. Teach us to put our full confidence.

And we struggle. Sometimes we struggle with putting our full confidence in you. But your word teaches us that we can. And I know there's an opportunity for all of us to put more of our confidence in you and what you accomplished for us.

That we can live our Christian lives in peace and love with you, knowing you. And can be transformed in our lives to be more like you every day.

Because we're at peace with you. We thank you for your word and for what you accomplished for us on that cross. In Jesus' mighty name, amen.