



Message **Transcript** Selfish to Surrendered

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Amen. It is great to be back worshipping at BRAVE Church. There's something about worshipping in other churches while we're gone. But there's something special about being back here with all of you. And it's such a thrill to be back, Kim and I, and our family are very rested from vacation. Looking forward to this Ministry calendar year, all that God has. And just very, very excited to be back.

I had a chance to listen to some of the preachers that were here in my stead. I was blessed by all of that. I hope that you were too. Amen. It's good stuff. And so excited. So, who's ready to hear the word of the Lord this morning? Amen. All right. All right. Let's pray. Let's ask the Lord to bless our time together.

Lord, we just thank you for the privilege of hearing you. Lord, that's why we gather. We had together to give you worship and honor you and to hear your word. And, Lord, I believe that you have a word directly for each person that is listening.

And so, Lord, make it specific and apply it specifically to each person who is here this morning, who is ready to receive your word. And, Lord, may we be ready to receive it. Lord, if there's any known sin in our life, we confess that before you now, knowing that you're faithful and just to forgive our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Lord, we're ready to hear you.

So, Lord, I asked you to be helpful to me as I preach today. And Lord, bring forth your word in such a way that changes us, that we will become who you say we are, that we put into things, the very things that you show us to practice. And Lord, for all that we give you all the glory, honor and praise. And now, all of God's people who are

ready to receive His Word, hear it, believe it, and put it into practice. Agree with me by very loudly saying the word Amen. Amen.

On Friday, our vacation ended and we were flying home. And I don't know about you, but when we travel as a family, it's easier for me to travel by myself than with everybody because it involves luggage, it involves everybody getting their stuff in the car, it involves getting to the airport on time. And my wife had asked me during the week, "What time we need to leave on Friday?" And I quickly glanced at my phone and said, "9:20." And I said, "9:00, we got to be ready at 9:00."

And if you know my family at all, we don't get up early. If left to our own, we would just roll however it goes. I didn't wear shoes for an entire month. I mean, it was just one of those times I knew to get my family up at 6:00 in the morning, make it to the airport was going to be a challenge.

So, I was praying for my mood not to try to push people too much. And sure enough, everybody got up at 6:00 without incident. It went really well. We got the luggage packed in the car, we got to the car, we got the car turned in, we got to the place to check in at about 8:00 in the morning. And I was like, "This is incredible. We've never had this happen." And I got to the front and they said, "Where are you flying?" I said, "Denver." They said, "We don't have a flight to Denver." I said, "Yeah, you do." They said, "Can I see your boarding pass?"

So, I pulled out my app for the airline to show my boarding pass. She took a look at it. She looked up and she said, "This is 9:30 or 9:20 p.m." Apparently, the letters

p.m. makes a difference on your boarding pass. So, I looked at my wife to see... This going to be one of those moments I get a lot of grace or not. So, I affirmed everybody and their willingness to be there early. And I turned on my uncle and aunt live in Orlando.

So, we spent the day with them, it was fine. But the whole thing was, if you don't pay attention to the instructions that are given to you, it changes everything. There was a total shift in what we did once we understood what was really being stated. Nowhere is this more true than when it comes to making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Jesus gives us a mandate. After he was risen from the dead, he made an appointment with his disciples in Galilee, some 60 miles north of Jerusalem and invited them all to meet him there. And there he gave what we refer to as the Great Commission. If you have your Bibles, I encourage you to open up to Matthew 28:18-20.

Matthew 28:18-20, I want to read these verses because this will be the overview for our entire series over the next six weeks. And we'll end back here. But I want to give you just a little overview of what Jesus says. So, he calls all his disciples together.

And in Matthew 28:18-20, here's what he says. Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to me, in heaven, and on the earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."

Now, we call this the Great Commission because what Jesus's plan was, is to use his disciples those that were gathered within there and all of us who are called by the name of Jesus Christ to be used in this mission of making disciples. Now, in this text, like before he tells him to go, what's he tell them? He says, "All authority in heaven and earth has been given to me." That's a lot of authority.

I had somebody asked me after service last night, "Where did Jesus get his authority?" And here's where he got his authority. He's God, he's always been God. He's always existed. He's always had all authority. So, he's reminded the disciples, "I have all authority. It's been given to me." And then, he gives the command to make disciples. And he gives us how to do that and go, baptize and teach everything that he commanded.

And then, he gives the promise of His presence, "I'll be with you always to the very end of the age." Now, just by show of hands, how many have heard that before? How many have heard that before? All right. We've all heard that. But when it comes to making disciples, sometimes we think this, sometimes we say, "Well, that's the church's job."

So, we asked ourselves the question, "Hey, how are we doing making disciples?" Many of us start thinking about church. I went to BRAVE Church when there was 10 people. Now, there's a few thousands. So, we're actually, doing a good job. I think we're doing pretty great.

But what Jesus commanding his disciples to do, he's talking to them individually,

it's really a question for us individually, how are you doing making disciples? Who are the disciples that you're making? Who are the disciples that you've made? Are they quality disciples? How do you know if their quality disciples? I mean, that's really what Jesus is setting the stage for.

And when it comes down to it, each one of us is called by Jesus in his mandate and mission to go out and multiply disciples. We're called to go make this up. We're called to make something. Now, for those of you that know me, I can't make anything. I mean, I can't make a model airplane, I can't fix things in my house. I just can't do a darn thing. I mean, I can change light bulbs, I can do that. That's about it.

And what happens is, I have this history in my life of not being able to do anything mechanical. I mean, I recall when I bought a CD stand some number of years ago from Walmart, I tried to put it together, it's supposed to take 10 or 15 minutes, it took me like three hours, and the thing wobbled until it broke.

I recall, when I was first married to my wife, she got a mirror for the bathroom. And I decided to surprise her while she was gone to put the mirror and only involve two screws. But I accidentally, hit a stud and left two huge holes in our wall and had to call somebody out to put the mirror in. There may have been swearing during that time. I don't remember, right?

I have this history that tells me it's... I've gone through frustration that I can't do it. Anger at the fact why can't I do it, and then come to this paralysis. Now, I never do anything. Any activity in my house that needs to be done mechanically is simply a

phone call away, a 100% of the time.

And every time I have friends come over and fix something for me, they'll say something like this, "You know, you can do this yourself." I'm like, "No, I can't." And they're like, "All you have to do is watch a YouTube video." And I watch YouTube videos all day long. I never know how to do it. I would need somebody to come and move my hands and maneuver me and show me how to do it.

So, I want to tell you this, when it comes to a pastor talking to a congregation about how to make disciples, some of you feel like I do mechanically. And you say, "Well, that's a pastor's job. You're skilled in that. You went to school for that. That's you, that's not me. And I can listen to you preach, but it's not going to help me actually do this."

Let me make you a promise on the onset of this series. If you participate in the next six weeks, I will show you how to do this in such a way that I promise you, you'll be able to do it. And here's why I know you can do it, because Jesus says that you can do it. And he wants you to do this. And if you want to be part of the mission of Jesus Christ, that's the shift that we're going to take.

Now, oftentimes, we start talking about discipleship like, if we asked you to define it, that's when I'm going to start with definition. We would have as many different definitions for what a disciple is, as we do people in the room, like what's discipleship? We'd have that many definitions. How would you define it? What is it? We're going to take a look at what it is.

And here's the challenge. What you're going to ask yourself, what you're going to be tempted to do is, you're going to be tempted to do... Okay, what do I have to do? What's the rule? What's the method? What's the methodology? How do I? We'll get there. But we're not talking about rules here. We're talking about relationship here.

The only way that making a disciple works is, if you're rightly connected to the Lord Jesus Christ, and you have relationship with him. Otherwise, if you don't have relationship with Christ, everything you're going to hear is going to feel like a bunch of rules. Or if you don't have a relationship with Christ, you're going to think you're a disciple, because you're doing a bunch of things, but you're not even connected to Jesus.

Let me give you an example. This week before we came home, I was asking each one of my kids like, "What was your favorite part of our vacation? It was at a restaurant, was it a ride at Disney, and we were on a lake for some of the time, was it learning to do things, waterskiing, whatever. And all my kids gave me their answers.

And then, my youngest, I asked her, I said, "What was the best part of vacation?" And she said without hesitation, she was like, "Daddy, it was being together the whole time as a family." And I said, "Well, we're together a lot. Like, what do you mean?" She's like, "Daddy, when we're at home, you work. I have you to myself all day long every day." And she jumped up and gave me this huge and a kiss, to which I was like, "What do you want? I mean, I'll buy you whatever, right?"

And it moves the Father's heart the same way. He doesn't need us out doing a

bunch of stuff, and following a bunch of rules. What moves the Father's heart is when we embrace Jesus in such a way, he's like, "You love my son, I put on my love." That's what discipleship is all about.

Everything flows out of the overflow of our relationship with Jesus. And that's my foundation. And we're going to talk about six different foundational choices we're going to make over the next six weeks, and these are choices that are ongoing in our life, so that we are disciples. And so, that we're actually making disciples of other people as well.

And so, to do that today, I want to take a look at foundational choice number one. And to do that, I invite you to open your Bible to Matthew 16. Matthew 16, go back a few chapters, verses 24 through 27. Matthew 16:24-27. This is a great place to start, if we're going to talk about discipleship, and how to make the shift into relationship because when Jesus called His disciples in Matthew 4:17, or 4:19, He said this, he said, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men."

What did the disciples do? They dropped their nets, they left everything they had, and they followed him. What would cause someone to do that? And then, all throughout his ministry he was saying, "Follow me, follow me, follow me." Now, in this section of Scripture, just to set it up, here's what's going on. There's really two groups of people that were following Jesus all the time. There were indifferent and hostile people to Jesus. And there were people that really wanted to know how to have a relationship with Jesus.

And he dealt with them all the time. I mean, a lot of the group were the Pharisees. They were the religious leaders of the day. And in this text, in the beginning of Matthew 16, they show up and say, "Hey, Jesus, just give us a sign. That'll be enough. I mean, just prove that your God, then will believe you."

Now, here's the irony of that. He'd already been doing science. He turned water into wine. He had healed the people. He had restored sight to the blind. He helped the crippled to walk. He'd even raised people from the dead. And yet, they're coming to him like, "One more just prove it, just prove it, prove it."

So, he got that whole thing going on. Then, he gathers his disciples. He takes them to Caesarea Philippi, the most pagan place on the planet of the dead. And he asked them this question, "Who do you say that I am?" And they said, "Well, some say your John the Baptist and others say, Elijah." He was not someone would ask.

I'm not concerned about what other people think, who do you say that I am? And Peter responds to him says, "You're the Christ, the Son of the living God." And he said, "Well, blessed are you, Simon, son of John, for this was revealed to you by my father, who's in heaven. And upon your testimony, I'll build my church and the gates of hell will not prevail against it."

In other words, every time someone say, "If you're saved because you're David because the Father gave you grace, to see the glory of his son, and you responded to him, and he loves you with an unconditional love. And nobody did that for you. But God, God did it in your life."

And after Jesus does that, then he takes his disciples aside and begins to tell them that he's going to go to Jerusalem and be crucified. He's going to be buried in the grave, but don't worry, he'll rise from the dead. At this time, Peter takes them aside and rebukes him. He says, "No, no, no, you don't understand. I know that you're the Lord. Now, you're not going to die. You're going to stay with us."

And what does Jesus say? "Get behind me, Satan, for you not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men." So, here's what you have, you have a group of people that are basically, "I don't think you are who you say you are, prove it. Or I don't really care if you're that, prove it." And he has other group of people like, "We believe who you are. But here's how we want to live. We want to tell you how to do your thing for us."

You got the same two groups of people today. You have some people that are like, "Hey, just prove yourself that you're God. And then, I believe." And you have other people like, "I believe. Now, Jesus, let me tell you what you need to do for me all the time." Would like to know what Jesus said next? This is where we're at in the text.

Matthew 16:24-27, Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with His angels, and will then repay every man according to his deeds."

This is Jesus's response to a group of people who are hostile or indifferent. This is Jesus's response to a group of disciples who want to know, "Hey, what's the next step? What do I need to do? What's my foundational choice?" And this is what he says. He says, "If anyone wishes to come after me." Now, this whole word wish is to desire. It means, if we have a burning desire to do this, like if you really wish to come after me, and notice what he says, who's he addressed it to? To anyone. So, who would that include? Who would include?

All of us.

Everybody, includes you. I mean, it doesn't matter what your gender is, your height, your weight, your nationality, the color of your skin, your age. If anyone would come after me, like you people that want to see signs, you people that are indifferent to me, hey, you that really want to follow. Anyone, this is the entrance way, this is foundational steps. If anyone would wish to come after me, he must.

Now, why is Jesus given a command? He must. It would be similar to this. If you want to drive my car, you must use my key. If you want to enter through the front door of my house, you must use my key. I mean, if you want to do it, it's conditional. In other words, I'm going to make you do this, but if this is something you desire to come after me, then there's some conditions for it.

And really, this is the foundational choice. It's foundational for everything we're going to be talking about over the next six weeks. You get this one wrong, you missed the whole thing. You get this one right, you can begin to grow. And here's foundational

choice number one. Are you ready?

Foundational choice number one is this, choose to surrender to Christ's authority. Choose to surrender to Christ authority. Jesus said, "He must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me." You're choosing to surrender to Christ authority. Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 28, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Okay?

He knows he has all authority. You need to choose to align your allegiance, under his authority. Let me tell you what the word surrender means. Surrender means this, it means, to yield to the possession or power of another. To yield to the possession or power of another. When I surrender, I am yielding my rights, my authority, what I think is all about me, to the authority of Jesus Christ. We say Jesus Christ is Lord.

Now, why is this important? Because we live in a culture that teaches many times that you don't need to do that. That's for like the spiritual disciples. All you need to do is just believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins, was buried and raised from the dead. That's all you need to do. If you just do that, just once, God loves you. That's all you need to do.

Can I tell you this? The devil believes that Jesus Christ is the Son of God who died on the cross and was buried and was raised from the dead. Okay? He's never submitted and surrendered his life to Lord, he never will. He's going to be punished for that eternally. The Bible teaches that.

Just because you know facts about Jesus, doesn't make you a believer. It

doesn't mean you've transitioned. So, here's the question. He said, "Pastor Jeff, it says in the Bible, all you do is believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, you'll be saved." Yeah, believe on who? The Lord Jesus Christ, his authority. Confess with your mouth that Jesus says what? Lord.

So, there has to be a time in your life, where you've shifted your relationship to being in control of you to Jesus, you're my authority. You're the authority of my life. You get to call the shots. But Pastor Jeff, "I went to a Billy Graham crusade, I walked forward, I had tears in my eyes. I prayed this prayer, they told me to pray. Hey, Pastor, Jeff, I was at another conference, I heard this, it felt warm in my heart. Hey, Pastor Jeff, I was baptized in water. I know, that's got to count."

I'm not asking you what you've done. I'm asking you when in your life did your relationship with Christ shift from being about you to being about Christ's authority in you? That's what we're going to talk about. Now, you're going to ask the question, how do I know if I'm under Christ's authority? It's a great question. That's what Jesus is going to unpack for us today in this text.

How do I know that I'm surrendered to Him? And by surrender, what we mean is, I'm giving up my rights. I'm giving up my authority. In the early 1990s, during Operation Desert Storm, I remember watching a lot of newscasts. And at one point in time, I remember when some of the Iraqi soldiers were surrendering, you would see them in foxholes, and what were they doing? They were waving white towels.

It was their way of saying, "No longer us, we're not fighting against you. We're

not going against you. We're under your authority, you get to choose to do with us, whatever you want." That surrender. That's what it means. So, here's the question, are you surrendered to the Lord Jesus Christ in your life? When did that begin? And how is it continuing? That's foundational choice number one.

Now, let me tell you something. You missed this. You missed it all. You can't skirt this one. You can't miss it, right? I mean, Jesus said it up, he said, "You must do this." It means, Jesus establishes the rules, because he's authority. If you missed this, you missed the rules.

By the way, when you get to heaven, for those of you that are believers, and you start looking for people that would say, "Well, I'm looking for the person that said, well, I just believe that Jesus died. But I've never been a real disciple. I never submitted to His authority. I just knew the facts about Jesus." You won't find them in heaven, because they're not there. That person's called unsaved.

Let me just tell you this, some of the reason for some of you hearing my voice today and you're wondering why, why is this not working for me? I'm doing all the same things my friend is doing. I'm going to church, I'm singing the songs, I'm listening to the preaching, I have my own Bible. I'm even in the small group. It's just not working. It's just not working."

Here's my question, are you surrendered to the Lordship of Jesus Christ? Because if the answer is not, here's why it's not working, because you're not saved. And if you're not saved, then God can't pour his life in and through you, right? And

that's what's going on. You can't skirt this, you can't miss this, the rules that are set up by Jesus's authority. Just like in society, there's rules that are set up by our authority and our government.

A couple months ago, I was coming to church. And if you're ever out on Colorado in Hampden during the week, you understand it's a very busy intersection. As a matter of fact, in the mornings, when I come in on Hampden, it's usually backed up all the way back to that Lutheran Church.

And so, I don't know if you noticed this, but there's like a middle lane that's got dots on it that's aligned. And if you just get into that turn lane down by the Lutheran church, you can zoom by all the traffic and you don't have to get stopped by anybody. And because the light to turn to Colorado doesn't waive or allow me, I've done that for a long time. That's how I get the church.

Apparently, it's not legal. Because about two months ago, as I was turning around to Colorado, I saw police lights behind me, and I'm thinking, "Was it me? It couldn't be me." I don't know if I did anything wrong. And the guy in front of me turned off. And sure enough, he's right on my tail. So, I thought to myself, "I'm pulling into church to see if he has the guts to give me a ticket here."

And so, I pulled into the church, I went to get on my car. He said, "Stay in your car, sir." I said, "Well, I work here." And he said, "I know stay in your car." So, I'm good, I got that in. He came back, and he said, "You know what you did wrong." And I was like, "I kind of have an idea."

But he's like, "You went down the turn lane." I said, "Well, I turned." He's like, "Yeah, but you can't stay in that lane that long." And he goes, "I'm just going to let you off with a warning." I said, "Thank you very much." I said, "I'll let all our staff know because I'm sure they do the same thing, too. It's not just me." And told him on. And he said, "You might want to consider coming back road or doing whatever."

So, I haven't done that since. Why? Because it's a rule. Now, here's what he went on to tell me. It's not just a rule to rule for a reason. He's like, "I'm telling you this because you don't know the amount of car accidents I've seen because of people doing what you do, because other people that are turning the other way, they can't see that you're in the middle lane. And it may not even be you, but to be somebody else. And I'm doing it for your own safety." I'm like, "Okay, I get it. It's for my own safety. It's for the good of the community."

I understand the rule now because why? Because I have a relationship, right? And that's what this is all about. So, when Jesus is talking about his authority, he's inviting you under the umbrella of his authority, not because he's trying to be authoritarian. It's just the fact about Jesus, He created everything. He created the whole universe. He created it all. And he's telling you, I need to be in control because I know what I'm doing.

And so, the question then becomes for us, how do we know that we're remaining under the authority of Christ? Like, how do I know that I've shifted my allegiance? How do I know that I'm truly a disciple, and I'm growing in Christ? And this is what Jesus

spells out. He says, "He must deny himself, take up his cross and follow Me."

So, let's unpack those three together. The first is this, to deny yourself. It means this, it means you choose to remain ruthless with yourself. If you're a disciple, you're going to choose to remain ruthless with yourself. Now, what ruthless means without compassion, or pity or mercy. It means, that you're going to be strict about you. You say, "Well, how do I do that?"

Here's how. You treat yourself the way you would talk about other Christians. I mean, have you ever noticed that in your heart, whether you verbalize it out loud, sometimes you look at other Christian like, "Oh, they call themselves a Christian, and they have a marriage like that? They call themselves a Christian and they have kids that are unruly like that. Hey, they call themselves Christians, and they drink like that. They call themselves Christians, they eat like that. They call themselves Christians, they spend like that. They call themselves Christians, and they idolize their time like that. They call themselves Christians."

Instead of doing that, here's what Jesus invites us to do. Take that, turn it into a mirror and put it right in front of yourself. It means, I'm going to be ruthless with me to make sure that in every area of my life, Jesus has all authority. So, think about your life for a minute. Think about all the different components of your life. Think about the relationships you have if you're married, if you have children, parents. I mean, there's a relationship component. There's avocations, what do you like doing for fun? There's your finances, there's your health. There's all sorts of different components that we have in our life.

Here's the question, is Jesus Christ Lord over every single one of those components? Because here's the reality, he wants to be. He wants to be. I mean, the key word here for this whole text is denial. It's deny, deny. Now, everything in our world says, it's about you, it's about you, it's about you. It's what you want, it's what you want.

And when you fail, here's what people will tell you. It's all about you, you failed, you, you you. It's all about you. In the kingdom, it's all about Jesus. And are you in a place that you're willing to deny yourself? Because not about you, it's kind of like this, originally, we purchased a different home, solar home, purchase different home. And if I invite you to my house, I would tell you about my home, I'd like you to come to my house. My house or I'll pick you up in my car.

Here's the reality. In reality, it's not my house. I mean, it's probably like a lot of you that are here. I pay a mortgage every month to have my house. The bank could say, "It's my house, we're allowing you to steward the house, so long as you continue to give us your mortgage payment every single month. It's not your house." The bank would say, "It's my house."

Here's what Jesus would say, everything you have, your body, your resources, your relationships, your influence, everything you are, that's not yours, it's His. Here's the question, has it come under the allegiance of him? Because here's what we have a hard time doing.

So, say you're married, and there's a challenge in your marriage, which if you're

married, at some point in time, there will be a challenge in your marriage. That's a great place for an amen.

Amen.

All right. So, what we tend to do when we have a challenge our marriage? We say, "Well, I'm going to work on that. I need to work on that. There's some things I need to work on," which is a good thing. I mean, all these things are good thing. I need to pray about my marriage. I need to study God's Word about marriage. I need to get a mentor. Somebody really knows how to do this for my marriage. Perhaps, I need to get some biblical soul care for my marriage.

And I would tell you, all those things have their place and they're all good. If and only if, first and foremost, you recognize it's not your marriage. And if, and only if the counseling and the mentoring and what God's Word is saying will tell you what you need to be, even if it doesn't result in the outcome that you want. I mean, I've done counseling for 30 years in ministry, and I can tell you, comparatively, a few times where people come in and say, "Hey, listen, I got a challenge in my marriage. I don't know what my spouse's challenges; I think I do. But I need you to deal with me, I want to know what God says about me. I'm willing to change anything Jesus wants to in me."

Those are so fun counseling sessions. Because all I got to do is open up my Bible to Ephesians 5 and other places, and I can help you. Here's what God says, "You need to be as a husband, here's what God says you need to be as a wife, I can

pour that in because God will tell you what you need to be." If you need help with your finances, I can open God's word all over the place and show you how to help your finances.

If and only if, you're willing to deny yourself. Because if you're not willing to deny yourself, what you're going to say is, "Yeah, but that's not the outcome I want. That's not what I wanted my marriage to be. That's not what I wanted my financial outlook to be. That's not what I..." If it's what you want, and not what Jesus wants, it doesn't work. There has to be denial of self.

And when you get under the allegiance of Christ, here's what happens. You begin to read God's word differently. It's not, "Well, God suggests this, this is a good idea." It means this, I want whatever God wants. It means, when you hear a sermon like this, you're processing what is God saying specifically to me that I need to do.

If you can come month after month, week after week, year after year, sitting here in the sermon and you're like, "The most boring 45 minutes I've ever heard, I don't get anything out of it." It's because there's something in your heart that hasn't shifted to a relationship with Jesus. Because if you are in relationship with Jesus, and the Word of God is preached accurately, God will speak to your heart in such a way where you said, "That's me. That's me. That's me."

And denying yourself, can I just tell you this? It's not a onetime thing. I got married 15 years ago, I denied myself that first week. But then, I already did that. Now, it's a moment by moment, day by day, minute by minute, hour by hour denying

myself. Think about those places in your life where you get frustrated, angry, maybe you're paralyzed in it, because this keeps happening. This keeps happening.

There's probably an area in your life where you're not denying yourself. It's probably, an area in your life where you're saying, "I'm wanting it to go this way. I've been praying about this for 30 years, it's still not happening." There are times where you need to pray about things for 30 years, that still haven't happened. And God's telling you, "Hold on to that, I'm going to bring it forth." There's other times you could have stopped praying for it 30 years ago, because God told you, "I'm not going to answer that." If you're dating someone in here, and God told you, "Don't marry them, he ain't changing his mind." Break up, move on, it saves so much time.

Yup.

All right. If God told you, "I'm not giving you that job," don't send in your resume, it saves so much time. Sometimes, we want certain outcomes, so we're going to go through the steps, and then we'll, "God, I heard you say no, but I'm just going to... We'll see what happens here. I'm going to pray about it." He ain't changing his mind.

When you deny yourself and say, "God, I'm not going to concern myself with the outcome here. This may not even be what I want. This may not even be what I think I desire. But I'm sensing, this is what you want from me, I'll do it."

Now, some of you in here, I've already told you you're not believers in Christ, because you've never submitted to the Lordship of Jesus Christ. You're just going through religious motions, right? But some of you in here have definitely responded to

the Gospel. You said, "I want Jesus Christ to be my Lord." But what happens and the reason that you're stunted in your growth, or you're in a rut, and the tires are spinning, and you're not going anywhere, is because the Lord has spoken to you clearly about an area of your life that He wants you to deny yourself, and you're like, "Why do I have to do that? Why don't they have to do that?"

Amen.

That's not that big of a deal. And here's what we tend to do. God can speak to you about any area of your life in anything? And again, church listened to me, this is really, really important because it's not church that's making disciples, it's individuals in the church that are making disciples.

And so, therefore, God is going to call you to do different things differently than everybody sitting next to you. See, we won't rules. Pastor, tell us, can we drink or not drink? And then, I'll tell you whether I agree with you and come to this church again. Pastor, tell me, can we celebrate Halloween or not? And you tell me and I'll see if I agree with you, and I don't know if we come to church again.

Hey, Pastor, tell me which version of the Bible you preach? So, Pastor, tell me, I want to know the rules. If they agree with what I think the rule should be, and then we'll form a great community. That's not discipleship. Discipleship is God telling you what you need to do, which means some of you will hear something like this, "I don't want you have cable anymore in your house." What? Well, how come they can have cable? Because they can.

I don't want you to drink anymore. What? It's not wrong to drink. How come they can drink? It doesn't matter what they can do. What does that to you? I told you not to drink. I don't want you to hang out with those people anymore. Why not? Because it's not growing what I want to grow on you. I mean, individually, God is calling us all the time if we're sensitive to make little incremental choices to continue to deny ourselves.

If you say in that instance as a disciple of Jesus, "I'm not listening to that one. I'm not doing that one." Understand this, God is way more patient than you. "Well, I'm not getting rid of that. I'm not doing that." He'll talk to you about it for the next 60 years. And you wonder why he's not talking to you about other things it's because this thing is hindering where he's trying to take you.

And the beauty of the Gospel is, that even if you know that Jesus is Lord, and there's an area in your life that you've been struggling with, and you haven't turned over to him, at any moment in time, when you shift to the relationship with Christ, and say, "Jesus, I surrender, I'm done holding on to that, would you come take care of this?" There's joy in that moment where he continues to come and grow you.

And so, as a disciple of Christ, there should always be ongoing mode, they don't happen every day. Sometimes, they're going to happen every month, but they're seasonal, where they come in, and he says, "This is what I want you to change right now. This time, I want you to stop doing. Hey, this is something I want you to start doing. Hey, you're doing it, but I want you to do it a little differently than what you were doing before." That should be ongoing in our life all the time.

And what we tend to do is, we tend to ask questions like this, "Who else is doing that? If this is really God, then there has to be like 20 other people in our church that are doing. And if it's not, I'm not going to." It doesn't matter what anybody else is doing. Are you willing to deny yourself for the Lordship of Christ? And it'll be unique to you.

But when you do it, you will feel the joy of Christ in your life saying, "Hey, thanks for letting me have that." The key word is denied, deny. It literally means in the Greek, to repudiate yourself. In a world of self-esteem, and all the different things that we have about self, it flies against that. And Jesus say, "Anyone that wants come after me, hey, here's step number one, you're surrendering to my Lordship. So, here's I'm asking you to do, I need you to be about manage, you do it my way." How to know what God's way is? Can I just tell you? But 95 plus percent of everything God's way is, is right in this book.

Right.

Now, yeah, there are things that God can speak to you about. And the closer you get to God's heart, and the more you know him, the more you recognize his voice, the more you see how it aligns with Scripture. And there are subjective ways that God still talks to us today. I believe he's alive, that's why he still talks.

But oftentimes, if you just look in the word, you say, "What does God say about that?" He has answers for those things. And so, by denying ourselves with our keyword, denying, we're getting ready to do the next thing. Notice what he says next

and take up his cross. That means, I'm choosing to remain ready to suffer. Ready to suffer.

Now, if you're trying to start a worldwide movement, and you're inviting people in, most of the times, you don't say, "Hey, it's not about you, and you need to be ready to suffer and die." Okay? But that's exactly what Jesus says. He says upfront, "This is what it's going to be." It means, we need to be ready to suffer.

Now, everybody in the first century would have known what taking up his cross meant. Notice what it says, Jesus didn't say, "I'm going to pick up your cross for you." He says, "You're going to pick up your own cross." Picking up your cross literally meant this, crucifixion was the worst capital punishment perhaps ever invented. Certainly, wasn't wrong, we don't crucify people anymore because of the gruesome torture that goes along with it.

It's not an immediate death where you die within a minute or two. I mean, you're going to suffer greatly for hours at a time. And even before you get put on the cross, you're going to be beat significantly before you even get there. So, when it meant to take up your cross, everybody in the first century would have understood this.

It meant that an individual who once had publicly rebelled against a known law in Rome, that was punishable by capital death, was now submitting to the authority that they had once rebelled against, and doing that publicly in the town. It meant when Jesus was carrying his cross, it was Rome's way of saying, "He rebelled against us. Now, he's submitting to our authority."

To take a bit on cross, it means that you're going to suffer for Jesus. I mean, I'd love to tell you that, hey, if you trust Jesus, he's going to give you more money, more happiness, more wealth, more pleasure, it's just going to be great and giggles all the time. There are moments like that, and God is a great God, and God does bless us, and God do good.

But guess what? If you follow Jesus, you'll suffer. And let me tell you why you'll suffering. You're going to suffer because you've lived your life prior to knowing Christ in a worldly system, all of us have done it. And there are certain things that get championed by our world that aren't championed by Jesus Christ.

And when you begin to make him Lord, here's what he's saying, "Are you willing to put my cross on your back over every area in your life? And are you willing to go public with that, so that everybody knows the reason you no longer do that? And the reason you start doing that, or the reason you do that differently, is because you're now under my authority?" That's what Jesus saying.

It's choosing to be willing to suffer all the way to my death because that's what crucifixion ended. The crucifixion ended in a death. And let me tell you something, I can tell you I'm pretty good authority, although I've never experienced death. Personally, I can tell I'm pretty good authority. People that die don't care about what goes on in this world.

There's nobody who's died, that's wondering who's going to win the next election. There's nobody that's died that's wondering about what news in the newspaper and

how it affects them. They're dead, right? That's why Paul says, in Galatians 2:20, "For I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."

Here's what Paul was saying, "Jesus invited me to die. Let me tell you something I already have. When I trusted in him, he has full allegiance over every area of my life." That's why, when Paul was... Hey, Paul, we're going to hurt you. Hey, Paul, we're going to kill you." He's like, "Okay, I'm already dead. What are you going to do? What difference does that make to me? For me to live as Christ to die as game, that's the goal of my faith. I want to be with Jesus.

Here's the truth, believer in Jesus Christ, if you've denied yourself, then the key word here is die. Are you willing to die to everything that you would have for this world to offer you for the sake of letting Jesus's allegiance live through your life? And if you're willing to do that, then you don't care so much about outcomes anymore.

You're not trying to control them anymore. You're not trying to tell God, "Oh, you better do this for me." Because what? Your relationship with him and what he wants is more important than what you desire.

And so, I'm dying, not because I'm saying, "Oh, I don't care anymore." I'm dying to myself because of the love that one has for me. And the truth is, he loves us so much. He gave his own life for us and wants to live that life through us. And that's what it means.

And Jesus is willing to do all the things that he promised to do in your life. But here's the truth. He wants to have full reign. He wants to do it. Did you ever wonder why Jesus picked the followers you pick? I mean, if you study through the New Testament, I mean, you would never pick those guys. You have a swearing blue collar fisherman that's like your lead agent, right?

You got a guy that doubts every single thing that you do. You got Matthew, who's a basically a white-collar criminal, but being supported by the government to do it. You got Simon who's a zealot, who wants to kill anybody that's a non-Jew on site. I mean, you got all this ragamuffin ragtag? Like, why pick those guys?

And by the way, the reason he picked them is because they didn't have a rabbi. Anybody worth having a rabbi would have gone to follow somebody else. So, why he'd picked these guys? Because he knew by having a heart of God, that these are men that will deny themselves and take up their cross for me all the way to their death. And that's what I need.

I need people that will live this thing out, so that I can live through them. I don't need talent. Did you know Jesus isn't looking for your talent? I mean, I listen to people sometimes, if we get so and so saved, if they just got to saving on fire that will change the world. No, it would change their sphere of influence, it wouldn't change the world. Jesus changes the world.

All Jesus needs is you to live your best you and you can change the world. Jesus picked these disciples because he knew that they would do that for him. If you're

saved, Jesus chose you for the same reason. He's got a sphere of influence in your life that he's pouring through to accomplish something in the kingdom that only you can accomplish. That's the whole point.

But he needs you to give him allegiance. Let me give you an example. A year and a half ago, I had surgery on my vocal cords. I've had a couple of operations in my life. And usually, it functions like this prior to going into the operating room, they have you change into a robe that doesn't cover anything, and then put you under a blanket that's not warm, and then we'll you into an operating room with an IV in your arm. It's super cold. And there's all these doctors standing around you, it's uncomfortable.

There's lights everywhere, and inevitably, a doctor will come kind of place his hand on your arm, where it's about time to go. And I'll ask you a question something like this, "Hey, just let me know about how long will it be until I..." And then, I wake up in recovery.

Because you know what they do in every operation? They put you to sleep. Do you know why? Because they don't need your help. They don't need you asking questions. They don't need your commentary. They don't need, "Are you sure you know what you're doing?" They need you out, so that they who are skilled to do what they're called to do can do it.

Can I tell you that that's the shift of being a disciple? The shift is allowing Jesus to do through you what you couldn't do by yourself. And if you're not willing to deny yourself and take up your cross, he can't come in and give allegiance and do what he

wants to do. But when you tell Jesus, "It's your marriage, this marriage is to glorify you. If these are your children, these children are called... I'm called to steward them to glorify you."

These are my resources. I'm called to use them to glorify you. This is my sphere of influence. I'm used to call this to glorify you. This is my body, I'm used to use it to glorify. So, I'm willing to make whatever changes you want me to make, even if it causes suffering in my life for your glory.

When that happens, God pours his life through people in a way that's unbelievable. And you don't have to be the one doing all the work. It's actually, fun. I mean, on this trip, like, my daughter learned how to wakeboard on this trip, my oldest daughter. And she tried, I mean, she was committed to learning to wakeboard.

And so, we would throw her the rope, she'd be behind the boat, she'd say, "Hit it." And we try to pull her up, and she'd fall down. She didn't get on the first time. She didn't get on second time. She didn't get on the third time, the fourth time, the fifth time, the sixth time. But every time we'd circle back, she said, "Dad, I got this, I got this. I'm going to do it." I'm like, "Okay, well, keep going." We kept going.

She didn't get it done the whole first day. But when we came back, she's like, "Dad, I'm getting it today." And she didn't get it that day. She didn't get it the second time. She didn't get third... But the fourth or fifth time, she was up and she was cruising, and she was smiling, and she was having a ball.

Now, here's the truth. She had to be tethered to the boat to do it. It wasn't that

she just was out on the lake saying, "Okay, I'm ready to go, hit it, hit it. Let's go." She had to be tied to the boat because the boat had the motor to pull her all the way around the lake. And once she got up, she wasn't doing any work. She was just holding on to that which was giving her the power to do what she needed to do.

In the same way as disciples, we're not called to go do a bunch of stuff for God, we're called to hold on to the one that wants to do a whole lot of stuff through us. And watch my daughter's face is all she was doing is holding on. And she's learning to balance and how does this work? And how does it go? And then, she would go down. She's like, "I want to do this, again."

Christians, as you're learning to hold on to God in different areas of your life, it doesn't mean you can hear one sermon about marriage and have a great marriage. It doesn't mean you can get one sermon about money and have a great job with your money. It means, you get to hold on for a while until you fall down. And when you do, there should be great joy, "I'm making progress."

Because for some of us, when we hear Lordship of Jesus, we start thinking this, "I got to get it perfect every time. I messed up." Just for comfort here, all of us have messed up in every area of our life. Just very curious, who has done something dumb with money before, just at least once in their life? Okay, who has done something dumb in a relationship just once in their life? I mean, we could go around, there's none of us that get it right.

And just because you're a Christian, and you're a disciple of Christ, it doesn't

mean you get it right all the time. And that's why we need to stop putting our voice and our eyes on other people look at how they're doing it wrong, and start putting it on us and seeing, "Now, this is where I didn't get it wrong. But compared to where I was, way different. Lord, I'm hanging on again, let's bring the boat back around, let's do this thing." That's what it means to die to yourself.

Now, you maybe ask yourself, "Then what's in it for me? Like, if I do all this, do I get anything out of it?" So, that's not very spiritual question. Peter, asked it. I want to know like, if I'm really shifting to let Jesus be Lord in my life, what do I get? Because Peter and Mark 10:28, "Peter began to say to him, "Behold, we have left everything to follow you." We've given it all up, I've done it all. Like, what's in it for me?"

Here's what Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house, or brothers or sisters, or mother or father or children or farms for my sake, and for the Gospel sake, but that he will receive a 100 times as much now in the present age houses, and brothers and sisters, and mothers and children and farms." Now, He says, "Along with persecutions and in the age to come, eternal life."

What's he saying? He's like, some of you, like as you listen to the Lordship of Jesus Christ, he's going to tell you to go into your neighborhood, and some of you is going to tell you to go around the world. And for some of you, he's going to say, "Stay put where you're at." For some of you, he's going to say, "Get out of town."

And for some of you, he's going to say, "Stay in this relationship." For us, he's going to say, "Get out of that relationship." For some, he's going to say, "Use your

money this way." And for us, he's going to say, "Use your money that way." But if you leave what you want to hang on to, to go follow Jesus, he fills in all the gaps.

What does that mean? I left my family to go follow ministry, what did God give me? He gave me a church family. I got all dads in the church. Get all sorts of older women, and mothers in the church that can pour into my life. I got all sorts of new brothers and sisters in the church in my life. And what about houses? I remember my biggest fear and being a ministry was that there's things I like to do, right? I mean, I like to boat and I like to do all this. I don't have a boat.

But you know what? God has never given me a boat. But he's introduced me to people that have one, and let me use it, right? God has never given me water skis, but he's introduced me to people that have it and let me use it. God has never given me a vacation home, but he's introduced me to people that have one and let me use it, right?

I mean, God has provided everything that I would ever want or desire, while I can continue to keep all my eyes fixed on him. We think sometimes, if I let go of what I want, and the outcomes that I want to see, and I hang on to Jesus, hey, I'm not going to get what I want. Let me tell you something. He's always telling Peter, "You're going to go through some persecutions and suffering. But let me tell you something, the life that you have with me, Jesus says, is far more abundant than you could ever have holding on to your own life."

You can't surrender and let go and not have more joy in your life. You can't surrender and let go and not have more blessings in your life. It's who he is. He's the

God of the universe, and he loves you unconditionally. So, deny yourself, take up your cross. The keyword die, die to yourself.

And I love this about Jesus. I mean, I remember seeing a commercial for the marines when I was in high school, and the first times I'd seen the marine commercial, and I didn't know about all the branches of service at that time, and I'm thrilled for all of them. And I appreciate all the men and women who have served in our country.

But the marine commercials, they had this way of kind of the few, the proud, the marines. It was like, not everybody can do this. But if you're listening to this, and you think you can... I'm not always watching but if I'm going to be in the service, I'll be a marine, right? Why? Because it's calling you up.

Here's what Jesus is doing to his disciples. Hey, listen, anybody who wants to come, anybody wishes to have life with me, here's how you come, deny yourself, take up your cross, and then do this. Follow me. Follow me. That means this. It's choosing to remain resolute in following Christ. It means I'm not going to waive. I'm going to be resolute and following Christ. It means, follow me.

Remember that game you played this little kid called Simon Says? Remember that game? Somebody stands in front, they got to be Simon. Like Simon said, "Touch your nose." Simon says, "Touch your ear. Touch your head." Oh, Simon didn't say, so you're out. Who's Simon? Like, why is he telling me to do all stuff? Why do you think that game was fun?

I mean, when you come into relationship with Jesus, you got to have a

relationship with them and you got to have his heart and he's got to have yours, so that you know what he's saying. So, when he says, "Hey, do this and move this?" Did Jesus say so?

Because if he didn't, why are you doing it? And the longer you've been a Christian, if you're not careful, the more you'll live off your past experience and say, "God doesn't work that way. I don't need to ask him on that. I don't need to consult him anymore."

And the Scripture is rife with people that were once walking with the Lord that decided for a season in their life, "I don't need to ask that question. I don't need to seek the Lord." Seek the Lord in everything. If in every decision you were making, or in every attitude that you had, you said, "Jesus is this how you want to live this through me?" And he said, "Yeah, that's what I want." Then, do that. Just I'm not sure I want to do this.

But didn't Jesus model that all the way to the cross? I mean, even when he's in the Garden of Gethsemane, his father said, "You're going all the way to the cross." He's like, "I don't want to. But not my will, dad, but yours be done. I'll do whatever you want." And for the sake of the Gospel, he endured persecution, all the way to death, so that you and I could be here.

And isn't that the beauty? Because when we resolute in following Christ, here's what you need to understand, if you go all the way back to the beginning of your Bible in Genesis 1:27, you will see that God created men and women in his image. In the

image of God, He created them male and female, He created them.

He didn't create any other thing in his image. The sun is not created in the image of God, the moon is not created in the image of God, the stars are not created in the image of God, your pet is not created, despite some of your belief in the image of God. Trees are not created in the image of God. Human beings were creating the image of God.

Why? Because the next thing he says is, "Be fruitful, and multiply, and subdue the earth and rule over it." In other words, here's what God was telling Adam and Eve, here's the deal, "You're going to rule on planet Earth for me. You're going to be my agents to get my kingdom work done on the planet. So, I'm going to live my life through you and what you agree on an earth, I'm going to do on earth because I want to be united with you," right?

In the same way he tells us in the New Testament, "If you abide in me and I abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." It means, when you're living as a kingdom citizen, God's willing to do whatever work he has for you.

The New Testament equivalent would be 2 Corinthians 5:20, which says, "Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ. And so, God were making his appeal through us." An ambassador is one who represents the president on foreign soil, you represent the king on foreign soil. And what do they create? They create a thing called an embassy. And the purpose of the embassy is on that place of soil in that foreign land. This is where the kingdom of God is expressed, right? Churches.

Church is where the kingdom of God is expressed on foreign soil. And we come together as Christ ambassadors together in his embassy called the church, so that we can go out and do his work. And here's the fact, God didn't call you just to save you, so he could take you to heaven. God called you because he has purpose in your life. And He wants you to know that, if you'll deny yourself and take up your cross and follow him, he's got great purpose for you. And the key word here is glorify. The key word here is glorify.

Now, when you hear the word glorify, I need to glorify God, I need to glorify God, you start thinking, I sing the songs, I've raised my hand before, I've listened to... It's not glorifying. The Bible says, "Whatever you do, whether you eat or drink, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Whatever you do, bring God glory."

All of you have different spheres of influence, all of you are going to be in different places with different relationships. In everything you do, make sure that you're glorifying God. That's what it means to follow him. Will you make the choice in any given situation to let Jesus Christ be the Lord of your life? Let him have his time with you.

Because he goes on to say in these next three verses, which we'll do very quickly, he's going to spell out the challenge of not doing it this way. He says, "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find him." Here's what he says, "If you're going to live for you, you're not going to live life to the full on this planet, and you're not going to have eternal life with me."

If you'll exchange your life, which means this, you give me all your sin, and I'll pour in all my righteousness. You give me all your deadness, I'll pour you all my life, right? If you'll do that, you'll have life with me. But it's your choice. It's your choice. You have to decide to make Jesus Christ, the Lord of your life. And he goes on to say, "For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Here's the answer, nothing and nothing. What's the profit? Nothing. What can you give for your salvation? Nothing. The only way is through the narrow gate of Jesus Christ being the Lord of your life. He says, "It's for the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of his Father with the angels and will then repay every man according to his deeds."

And some of you that aren't Christians were saying, "I just want my good outweighs my bad." Here's the problem with it. Here's the deeds that God's going to weigh, okay? When a person dies, the first one that they will see is the Lord Jesus Christ. Save your answer, that's who you're going to see. If you've denied yourself taking up your cross and follow Jesus, when you see him in all his glory, here's what he's going to say, "Well done, good and faithful servant, I can't wait to present you faultless before my Father in Heaven with exceedingly great joy, welcome home."

If you've never denied yourself and taking up your cross and are following him, here's what you're going to see, and here's what you're going to hear, "Depart from me, you worker of iniquity for I never knew you, get out of here." And then, there'll be

cast in the outer darkness where there's weeping and gnashing of teeth. I didn't make this up. This is what Jesus said, is going to happen, right?

So, we need to be sure that we're following him. And Jesus saying, he'll repay every man according to his deeds. Well, what deeds is he going to repay? See, here's what the Bible says in John 15. He says, "If you abide in Me, and My words in you, ask whatever you wished and it will be given to you." Why? Because it's to My Father's glory that you bear much fruit proving yourselves to be my disciples.

Here's the only deeds that count, fruit, fruit bearing. Those are the deeds that are going to be judged. How did you bear fruit for the Lord? That's what's going to be judged? Non-believers don't bear fruit. How do you know Pastor Jeff? Because in John 15, it says, Jesus say, finished this verse for me. Jesus said, "Because apart from me, you can do..." Say it really loud, apart from me, you can do...

Nothing.

Nothing. You have no fruit. So, I'm judging you for having nothing, get out, right? So, the question becomes today is this, when did Jesus Christ become the Lord of your life? He's always been Lord. When did you make him Lord of your life? When did you submit and surrender to His authority? When did that happen?

And if it has happened, like it has for many of you, and some of you are in a rut, because he's the Lord of your life, but that area over here that you've been praying about, but you know that God's put his finger on it. And it's like, "I know you, you know exactly what it is, and you haven't done anything with it." We've been talking about this

for like, three months now, and you know, but you don't do anything with it. You heard me, you know, but you haven't done anything.

And over here, I mean, same deal. I mean, you know what God's been saying to you, but I don't know that I'm ready to do anything yet. I'm going to have a permit; I'll come Tuesday night and see what he says. No. Are you willing to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Him?

Now, sometimes, after a heinous crime, a family member has the unpleasant experience at a crime scene investigation to come and identify the dead body of a loved one. I can't even imagine what that would be like. Here's what God the Father asked us to do. Come investigate my son because he came to this planet, left everything in heaven for you. And he came in, he was beaten, and was bludgeoned, and was beat on the head and put a crown of thorns on.

He was punched in the face, he was smacked, he was spit upon. He was whipped on his back until he could barely even stand and forced to carry his own cross, which he couldn't do, and got all the way to Calvary, where they drove nails into His hands and His feet, and he bled out for you.

And the reason he bled out for you is because of the great love with which we as the God had have for you. He loves you. What have you done with my son? He rose from the dead and has all authority. And here's God's question, does he have all authority in your life?

And there's many of us here to need to do work with God today. There was a

song written a couple hundred years ago by a guy named Sir Isaac Watts called When I Survey the Wondrous Cross, which is really taking a look at who Jesus is and what his life. The fact that he's given everything, like, what could you hold back from him?

It's really interesting song. It was written because Sir Isaac Watts, much like many of our young people today, "Our church songs are so boring, they're so awful." So, his dad said, "Well, then, write song." And so, he did. This one is a good one.

We're going to play the song here in a minute, as you hear this song, we're going to play one more song before we close. But I want us to do work with the Lord today. I want us to do some business with Lord. We have a prayer team upfront. But there's somebody here today, you need to give your life to Lord Jesus Christ. You need to come under His authority.

By walking forward today, here's what you're saying, "Lord, I heard you. And I'm surrendering. And I don't care what you had to say." And everybody that Jesus called in the New Testament, He called publicly, nobody, like walked away. I can't believe then. Now, they came forward and said, "I need to go public with this thing."

And some of you here today, you've trusted Jesus, right? You know, you know, that you know. But there's an area in his life, in your life that he's been placing his finger on, and you're like, "I know, that's me." I'm inviting you to come forward too. You may want to pray with somebody, you may want to pray by yourself, it doesn't matter.

But just by your act of obedience, and walking forward, what you're saying is, "Jesus, you have my life. I see you. I'm not afraid of what anyone else thinks." But

Professor Jeff, I've gone here for eight years, and if I walk forward, people will think I'm just getting saved for the first time, what they're going to say? They're going to say, "Praise God." And who gives a rip what other people think?

But Pastor Jeff, I'm already saving up for walking forward, people think I'm getting saved, but it's really just about a little deal. Who cares what other people think? How about this? Who cares about the crucified, resurrected Christ has been talking to you all morning saying, I'm giving you my word? What are you going to do with it? Don't walk out of this place without doing them.

So, as I invite the worship team up here, right now, I want you to prepare your hearts. I'm going to ask you to stand. We're going to pray. And as we sing the song, I'm going to invite the prayer team up. And if that's you, you want to give your life to Christ today, or you know, just by an act of obedience, Lord's been talking to me about my marriage, my finances, whatever, I'm just going to invite you forward during the singing of the song to say, "Lord, I give it to you."

I'll be right down front here, too. I'd love to pray with you. So, let's pray and prepare our hearts. And for those of you who would say, "No, Jesus is the Lord of my life." I mean, he is. I can't think of anything. He's showing me right now. Then, you pray to him. If that's you, you stay right where you're at, as we sing the song.

So, Lord, we give You all the praise. Lord, we know we're going over a little bit on time today. But Lord, what's going on here is eternal. It's more important than time. And so, Lord, for every person you're speaking to, we just pray that there'll be a

proper response to you the way you would want to see it, and that we give you all the glory. In Jesus' name, amen.