

Portrait of a Disciple – Part II
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John 1:35-51
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Turn with me in your Bible, if you will, to the first chapter of John. We'll be looking at Verses 35-51. This is our second message from this passage. So it is the second message in a series that I think is going to be three messages long called 'The Portrait of a Disciple'. We see that in this passage we have Jesus calling His first five disciples, two of whom are led to follow Jesus because of the testimony of John the Baptist when he says, "Behold, the Lamb of God," they follow Him. We find out one is named Andrew, most commentators agree the other, who is unnamed, the only unnamed disciple of the five in the chapter, must be the author of the book, John himself. It was John's nature to hide his own name, not anybody else's, so he is apparently with Andrew following John the Baptist, and he begins to follow Jesus.

Then we see the call of Phillip. Well, Simon Peter, then Phillip and Nathanael, so we have five disciples, the first five disciples called in this chapter. We see that the point of this being presented to us is so that we can hear their testimony because we have three powerful testimonies of three of these men in this chapter. So God wants us to hear their testimonies, but He also wants us to follow their example, to be disciples of Jesus, to embrace Him and follow after Him ourselves. So we said that in that sense, this text is a wonderful opportunity for us to examine what it means to be a disciple of Jesus Christ. What does it mean to be a Christian? Many proclaim to be Christians today, but how do you recognize a true follower of Jesus? How do you know if a professing Christian is truly a Christian? Most importantly, how can we ask that of ourselves? The Bible says, "Examine yourself to see if you are in the household of faith," 2 Corinthians 13:5. "Make every effort to make your calling and election sure," 2 Peter 1:10. So be sure of where you are, where you stand with the Lord.

So this passage presents to us a portrait of a disciple. It does so with two important, really two main points that we're going to look at. We looked at one last time—a disciple is known by what he follows after. One of the key words in the passage is the word '*follow*', it occurs four times in the passage. Most notably when Jesus tells Phillip, "Follow Me." It issues the command. We saw last time that to follow Jesus means that you break with your former loyalties, and you give Him your supreme loyalty. That is what a disciple is, that's what it means to follow Him. It means we deal with the question, "What do you seek?" Remember the question



that we looked at last time, the probing question of Jesus, “What do you seek? Why are you here? What are you looking for?” Cutting right to the heart of the matter, “What is it that you want?” A person who follows Jesus should be seeking to be with Jesus above everything else. Seeking to know Jesus, just like we sang a moment ago, “Knowing You, Jesus...” This is the only thing! You know Jesus by beholding Him. We saw all of that last time.

We come this morning to the second characteristic in this portrait, the second attribute of a true disciple of Jesus Christ, and that is the theme for this message. The title of this message would be, ‘Portrait of a Disciple’, subtitle, ‘A Disciple is Known by What He Finds Out’. There are two key words in this passage, the word ‘follow’ and the word ‘find’, and we’re going to see that this morning. It occurs five times in the text, listen for it as we read, Verse 35, John 1.

*John 1:35-51 ~ Again the next day John was standing with two of his disciples, 36 and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and *said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!” 37 The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. 38 And Jesus turned and saw them following, and *said to them, “What do you seek?” They said to Him, “Rabbi (which translated means Teacher), where are You staying?” 39 He *said to them, “Come, and you will see.” So they came and saw where He was staying; and they stayed with Him that day, for it was about the tenth hour. 40 One of the two who heard John speak and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother. 41 He *found first his own brother Simon and *said to him, “We have found the Messiah” (which translated means Christ). 42 He brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon the son of John; you shall be called Cephas” (which is translated Peter).*

*43 The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He *found Philip. And Jesus *said to him, “Follow Me.” 44 Now Philip was from Bethsaida, of the city of Andrew and Peter. 45 Philip *found Nathanael and *said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” 46 Nathanael said to him, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Philip *said to him, “Come and see.” 47 Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and *said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” 48 Nathanael *said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” 49 Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.” 50 Jesus answered and said to*

*him, “Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these.” 51 And He *said to him, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.”*

Let’s pray together.

Our Father, we ask now that as we look at Your word, that Your Spirit would take it and apply it to our lives. That You would help us understand wonderful things out of Your law, and that we might, in Your light, see light. We pray this in Jesus’ name, Amen.

Last time we looked at those important words, “What do you seek?” The first time the apostle John records for us directly the words of Jesus. The first words of Jesus in this Gospel are, “What do you seek? What are you looking for? What are you searching for?” The answer should be, “To be with Jesus, to know Him” That’s what we looked at last time, this idea of, “What are you seeking?” If that is the primary concern of your life, if you are known by what you follow after, by what you seek, that leads us directly to the second point of the message. A disciple is not just known by what he seeks, he is known by what he finds. As we follow after Jesus, as we orient our life around that one great priority, to see His glory more and more every day, what we find will define who we are, and will prove who we are. The word ‘find’ is found five times in the passage, twice in Verse 41.

*John 1:41 ~ He *found first his own brother Simon and *said to him, “We have found the Messiah”...*

Look at Verse 43.

*John 1:43 ~ The next day He purposed to go into Galilee, and He *found Philip.*

Verse 45.

*John 1:45 ~ Philip *found Nathanael and *said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.”*

This idea of finding, a disciple is someone who is continually finding out. There are three things that we’re going to see that a disciples finds out, and I think we will get through the first two today. A disciple is known by what he follows after,



by what he finds out. We're going to see three things that he finds out. We're going to look at two of them, I think, this morning. A disciple is known by what he finds out, and what he finds is His glory. When you look at what they found, they found the glory of Christ. And not just the glory of Christ one time, but there is the sense in the passage that the promise to a disciple of Jesus Christ is you will go on finding out more and more of His glory. You will see in an ever-increasing way, with ever-increasing clarity, that He is the marvelous Son of the living God. You will come to understand what that means more, and more, and more, the longer you walk with Him, the longer you follow Him. That is the idea of this passage. The first point that he finds, he finds His glory. We're going to see secondly, that a disciple will find himself. And thirdly, he finds a burden for the lost. I think we're going to look at that next week, finding a burden for the lost, which is clearly also in this passage. These men who follow Jesus find these three things.

1) They Find His Glory:

First, they find His glory. That is the main emphasis of the passage. That is the driving point that John wants us to see is the glory of the Son of God. In keeping with his whole purpose, he is presenting witnesses, three eye-witnesses give their eye-witness testimony concerning what they have found out about Jesus. Verses 40 and 41, you have Andrew, who is introduced as Simon Peter's brother, he finds his own brother, and he says to him, "We have *found* him." Then you have in Verse 45, ***Philip *found Nathanael and *said to him, "We have found Him...*** What is interesting, this idea of this finding of His glory, is the emphatic focus of the passage, and it is made clear really as you just read it.

Firstly, in the fact that we have the direct quotes. When you are reading narrative in the Bible, narrative is the recounting of a story. Most of the Bible is actually in narrative form, it tells stories of what God has done. When you are reading a story, one of the ways you focus on what the author wants you to see is you look for the quotation marks, because when an author slows down the speed of the narrative to give you a direct quote, he wants you to hear that quote. What you see in this passage is, the slowing down for the direct quote.

We don't get to go with Andrew and hear about where he went to look for Simon. The important thing is we know he found him. It probably took a while, but he doesn't tell us about that. What he wants us to hear is about what Andrew said to Simon. "We found the Messiah." That is the quotation marks, and so you see that. Read the text carefully, what is God trying to say in this passage? The same thing with Philip, he found Nathanael. That is fast narration, the speed of the narrative, a

lot is happening there. Maybe it took three hours to find him, it is condensed into three words— *Philip *found Nathanael and *said to him, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the Law and also the Prophets wrote...* Do you see the slowing down? Hear what he is saying.

In fact, this emphasis is even more clearly spelled out in the original Greek than it is in the English. Some of the translations, in an attempt to make this sound more appropriate in English, kind of muddy the waters a little bit. In Verse 41, you have two uses of the word ‘*find*’, right? It is translated in the New American Standard and most of the translations as ‘*found*’ both times. He *found* his own brother, and he said, “We have *found* the Messiah.” But in the original Greek the first *found*, he *found* his own brother, is actually in the Greek present tense, and it literally would read, “He *finds* his own brother.” That’s what the text says. He *finds* his own brother, and actually the word ‘*said*’ and ‘*said to him*’ is actually in the Greek present as well. It says, “He finds his own brother and *says* to him, ‘We have found the Messiah.’” That translates correctly. “We have *found*,” the perfect tense, “We have found the Messiah.” Why does he use the present? “He finds and he says,” the same thing happens in Verse 45, when it says, “Phillip *found* Nathanael,” the first ‘*found*’ is actually Greek present, ‘*finds*’. “Phillip *finds* Nathanael,” and when it says ‘*said to him*’, it says literally, ‘*says to him*’. This is a case of the dramatic present tense that we even use in English. That is why I wish they had actually left it in the text.

If I am telling you a story, I could say this: “This is a story I am making up because it didn’t really happen. Understand this is a made-up story. “When I was 12 years old, I got bitten by a dog.” I didn’t get bitten by a dog, thankfully, but if I had to I could tell you the story that way. “I was 12 years old, I got bitten by a dog. It really hurt.” You see? All of the tenses, “I was 12 years old. I got bitten. I was bitten.” That is the past tense, right? But what if I said to you this: “When I was 12 years old, I was sitting on my front porch. A dog comes across my yard.” You see that? *Comes across*, that is present tense right? “He runs up toward my porch.” *Runs*, present tense, do you see that? “And he bites me.” What happened in that whole process? Why did I tell it that way? Because I wanted you to see the action happening. I wanted you to feel the force of it. Do you see that? That is what is going on here. He says, “Andrew *finds* his own brother, and says to him...” He wants us to see Andrew there finding and speaking to him, so that our eyes are attuned, we’re listening for it, we’re seeing what he sees, we’re hearing what he heard, what Simon heard, and what Nathanael heard. That is the dramatic present. It is so it spotlights the words that come out of the mouths of the apostles. “We

found the Messiah. We found Him.” All that dramatic present to the decisive moment when you hear the testimony. “We found the Messiah.”

Now what do they say? They say, “We found the Messiah. We found Him of whom the Old Testament wrote.” Let’s think first of all about Andrew’s testimony. Then we’ll look at Phillip’s, and then we’ll look at Nathanael’s. Andrew said, Verse 41, “***We have found the Messiah***” (*which translated means Christ*). Messiah means ‘*anointed one, Christ*’. The Greek translation of the Hebrew word ‘*Mashia*’ means ‘*anointed one*’ as well. The Messiah was the one that they had been looking for, the one all Israel was waiting for, longing for. He was the king that would come and deliver, and the idea “***We have found the Messiah***”, how electric those words must have been in Simon Peter’s ears when he heard them. When he heard, “***We have found the Messiah***”. John wants us to feel something of that.

I mentioned before, in previous messages, he is writing to, most scholars believe he is writing to all Christians, he’s writing an evangelistic tract also to everyone that could possibly read this. But he has in mind, from the beginning, in particular, Jewish skeptics as well because he writes about themes that they would have understood very clearly. But he is writing to Jews who don’t speak Hebrew or Aramaic. They speak Greek, and that’s why you have phrases like ‘*which is translated*’. They knew about Messiah, but for them it is Christ, because they speak Greek. They are Jews, and Greek-speaking Jews are looking for ‘*Christos*’. So you had this evidence. So that term would have rang in the hearts of everyone who was reading this. Hearing these words for the first time, “We found Messiah.” “This is what we’ve been looking for. This is what we’ve been searching for. This is what we’ve been waiting for.” In fact, it is interesting, the Greek word translated ‘*we have found*’ in both places, rightly translated is, ‘*we have found*’ or ‘*we found*’ in Verse 41 and Verse 45, is actually the Greek word ‘*heuriskomen*’. That is the first person plural ‘*we have found*’. If you put this in first person singular it is the word ‘*eureka*’. “Eureka, I have found it.”

The famous story about Archimedes, the ancient Greek mathematician and physicist who was working on a problem that had been unsolvable, related to how volume works, and how to measure some things related to volume. Stepping into a bathtub, seeing the water displaced, suddenly the light bulb goes off and he finds the solution to the problem that had plagued and stumped scholars of his day. Reportedly, he runs out, getting ready to get in the bathtub, runs directly out into the street yelling, “Eureka! Eureka! I have found it! I have found it!” It is that sense of joy of discovery that these apostles are communicating. “What we have

been looking for, we have found! We have found Him! We have found the Messiah!” The whole Old Testament, that is Andrew’s testimony. We looked at Andrew’s testimony, now let’s look at Phillip’s testimony.

“We have found Him of whom the prophets and Moses wrote. We have found the one that the whole Bible...” The whole Bible they had at this time was the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi. “We have found Him of whom Moses wrote in the law,” the first five books of the Bible, “and all of the prophets.” All of the rest of the Bible. “We have found the one they were writing about. We have found Him.”

In fact, it is interesting, again in the word order in the original is even more emphatic. The first word in the sentence, in the Greek, remember they can move their words around like Spanish and some other languages can. In English we are more locked into certain word order. In the Greek it actually says this, all that focus, remember the dramatic present, Phillip *goes*, and he *finds*, and he *says*. What is he going to say? He says this, this is the word order: “Him, of whom Moses and the law, and the prophets wrote, we have found.” That is exactly the word order. The first word and the last word in the clause are emphasized always when people are rearranging for effect. What is the first thing he wants you to know? *Him*. Him! “We have found *Him*!” This is as emphatic as he can be. In one sentence, John encapsulating the testimony of Phillip, echoing the testimony of Andrew, “All that we have longed for, we have found!”

What an amazing thing it is to realize that every page of the Scriptures testifies of Jesus. Every book is ultimately about Him. This is what makes it such a delight to preach from the Old Testament. When you understand that now, looking through the New Testament at the Old Testament, we see how everything pointed to Him. Jesus, in fact, in this Gospel, John 5:39, in rebuking the Jews, the Pharisees who were resisting Him, rejecting Him, He says to them, who studied the Bible so much, the Old Testament, He says, “You search the Scriptures diligently, for you think that in them you have life, but *these* are what testify of Me. How can you be missing it?”

The entire Old Testament speaks of Him. The entire New Testament, in fact you can say it this way: The Old Testament anticipates Him, the New Testament announces Him. The Old Testament points to Him, the New Testament presents Him. The Old Testament builds up with greater intensity, builds up to Him, and the New Testament unveils Him. The whole announcement, the idea of proclamation

of the good news Gospel. Good news, the good news is: “He’s here!” That is what these apostles are saying, “We have found Him.”

That is an essential part of what marks a true disciple, the sense that we have found Him. I mean, think about how the Old Testament is fulfilled in Him. There are so many ways, we could spend hours, and hours, and hours and not even get through with the Book of Genesis and all the ways it shows Jesus. But just think about this, Genesis 3, man sins. Remember Adam and Eve take from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil? Their fellowship is broken with God immediately. They were ashamed of themselves, and run from God. They are separated from Him. They know that they are naked now. They cover themselves with fig leaves. There even in Genesis 3, we see an anticipation of Messiah, don’t we? Because God gives them in replacement for their fig leaves, He gives them animal skins. God Himself kills animals, and skins the animals, and makes clothes. Why is that? Because without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins. Without the shedding of blood there is no covering for us.

Even there, Genesis 4, Abel’s sacrifice is accepted because he approaches God through the offering of blood. Then you have Exodus, the Passover Lamb that is slain to protect the people from the death angel. You have Leviticus and the Day of Atonement. Numbers and Deuteronomy, which present the entire sacrificial system. The idea of the whole Torah of the first five books of the Bible is that if sinners are to be made right with God there must be an atonement. There must be sacrifice, there must be blood, a blood payment must be made. That ongoing need, the need for our sins to be paid for is something that reverberates throughout the pages of the entire Old Testament. Like a refrain, we must have a sacrifice. We need to be made right with God. We need atonement. All of that anticipation building up, anticipating, anticipating, anticipating gives way to the wonderful words of God’s announcements. In this very chapter, when John the Baptist, knowing all of that Old Testament anticipation, when he is looking at Jesus, what does he say? “Behold, the Lamb of God. He’s here!” That is the joy that these disciples were finding. “We have found Him,” and in that sense, we see that echoed in Nathanael’s testimony as well, Verses 46-49.

This account is more detailed, isn’t it? I mean, we don’t have anything of what Peter said in response to what Andrew told him, but here we have Nathanael voicing skepticism. And again, in quotation marks, the Lord wants us to hear that. After he hears him say, “We have found Him. Eureka! We’ve found Him,” Nathanael says, “Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” We have the account of Nathanael’s response to Jesus first, the account of his skepticism. We talked

about last time, Nazareth was a place that was looked down upon by other Galileans, but I think there is something more even than that. I think that is going on here. “Nazareth, what a terrible place to be from.” That is part of it, but I think Nathanael also knows the 1st Century Jewish proverb, saying among the people, that no prophet comes from Galilee.

So he’s genuinely thinking about this. “You’re telling me that the Messiah has come, the one about whom the whole Bible is written, and He came from Nazareth and Galilee? I don’t think so.” So he comes with skepticism on his heart. He wants to see for himself. He comes cautiously. He comes warily. He in a sense says, “I will reserve my judgment and not take the word of my friend. I must see for myself.” And against this backdrop of doubt and skepticism, we then see the encounter in verse 47. Against that backdrop of doubt and skepticism, listen to these words:

John 1:47 ~ Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and *said of him, “Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom there is no deceit!” 48 Nathanael *said to Him, “How do You know me?” Jesus answered and said to him, “Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.” 49 Nathanael answered Him, “Rabbi, You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.”

Skepticism had plagued his mind, this apparently godly Israelite, according to what Jesus said. “An Israelite in whom there is no guile.” He’s a true Israelite, a man who was looking for Messiah, but when he hears about it he’s skeptical. “He can’t come from Nazareth.” Well, he doesn’t know the whole story that Jesus is actually from Bethlehem, does he? And it was right for him to be skeptical, but just hearing those words of Jesus, that skepticism is washed away with the flood of assurance. ***You are the Son of God; You are the King of Israel.*** This was the effect that an encounter with Jesus had upon people. There was a dramatic realization that this man is different. And the sense was when you add it all up, we’ve found the Messiah. We’ve found the One about whom the whole Old Testament points to. We’ve found the Son of God, the King of Israel. When you look at all of that, what you see is Jesus is the one that they were waiting for, the one they were searching for, the one they were longing for, and now they’ve found Him, and every true disciple of Jesus, everyone who truly follows after Christ finds that same reality. *He is everything I’ve been waiting for. He is everything that I have been looking for. He is everything that I long for.* That is the heartbeat of a true disciple.



There's always an echo of those original testimonies. There's a sense of eureka that beats in the heart when someone truly comes to Jesus. *Eureka, I found it.* And He is everything that we long for. It's something that we don't just find initially. That's the beauty of this passage. He tells us in verses 50 and 51, essentially, He is telling those disciples who immediately make these amazing professions, "You are the one. You are the one. You are the one," He says essentially, if I can translate this into the vernacular, Jesus says, "You haven't seen anything yet." That's what verses 50 and 51 are all about. Jesus says:

John 1:50 ~ Jesus answered and said to him, "Because I said to you that I saw you under the fig tree, do you believe? You will see greater things than these." 51 And He *said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

It's interesting here again that this is where if the translators of the New Testament would just use a little Southern vernacular, we could be clearer. It says really: *And He said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, ya'll will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."* He says you (plural). He's not just talking to Nathanael. He's saying that to every disciple who's hearing Him. "You all will see this." He's saying to every one of us, every one of you who are true disciples of Jesus, He's saying, "You have not seen anything yet." He says in that image He uses in verse 51:

John 1:51 ~ "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see the heavens opened and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man."

This is a very clear and vivid allusion to Genesis 28. Here He's showing us how He fulfills the whole Old Testament again. He's alluding to Genesis 28, the story of Jacob. This is Jacob's ladder. Remember the childhood song that you sang at Vacation Bible School? *I'm climbing Jacob's ladder.* Jacob's ladder is from Genesis 28 when Jacob, remember, after he's stolen the birthright and the blessing from his brother Esau, Esau plots to kill him, and his mother says, "It's time for you to get out of here. Things are getting rough. Go to your uncle Laban in Paddan-aram." So Jacob begins this long journey alone by himself out in the wilderness, wondering what's happening in his life, fearful, afraid, discouraged, and needing God. Jacob is a picture of absolute weakness.

When we looked at Genesis a few months ago, or a couple years ago I guess actually, on Wednesday nights, we talked about how Jacob was kind of a momma's boy. Esau was the hunter. Esau was the guy that's outside. Dad really liked Esau. "Go get me some game." Jacob was around his mother all the time, and here the momma's boy is out on his own. He probably doesn't like camping, but he's camping. But it's different than just camping. He's not camping at a campsite that you pay for and it's protected. He's camping out in the middle of nowhere where there are bandits around, where he had no idea what's going to happen to him. He doesn't even know where he's going. He doesn't have a roadmap. He certainly doesn't have GPS, and he's got to find his way all the way to his uncle's, hundreds of miles away.

In this moment of fear, what happens as he's sleeping there with his head resting upon a stone, elevating his head probably on some of his clothing on top of that stone, and he has a vision, and there he sees the Lord standing in heaven, the heavens open up, and he sees the Lord standing above a ladder, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon that. Jacob wakes up after that, and God reiterates His promises to him. "You're afraid. You're scared." God says to him, "I will be with you, I will protect you, and I will surely bring you back safely into this land." God meets his need precisely and wondrously. Jacob wakes up the next morning, or shortly after the dream, we don't know, but he wakes up. I think he woke up pretty immediately. He didn't have time for another dream, and he calls the place Beth-el, and it becomes the town Bethel, House of God, and he said, "Surely I didn't know this was the house of God. This is the place where heaven (as one commentator says) where heaven's fullness meets earth's need."

Jesus says, "You know the story about Jacob's ladder? You know the place where heaven's fullness meets earth's need? I am Jacob's ladder. You are needy. You are poor. I am fullness. I am the bread of life. I am the One who has living water. I am the Good Shepherd. You need a Shepherd. I am the Good Shepherd. I am everything that you need." He says, "You haven't seen anything yet, and the longer you walk with Me, the more you will understand that to be true."

In fact, I'm convinced that throughout all eternity, that understanding, the depth and riches of that knowledge that Jesus is everything, will become more and more clear all throughout eternity. It will never get old. It will only get sweeter and more delicious and delightful all of our lives, because He is fullness. That's what He's saying.



I mean, He is the answer to every longing. You long to be loved. We all want to be loved, and some of us have more blessing in sort of earthly love than others. Sometimes at certain seasons of your life you have someone that loves you and then they're removed from your life, but you and I all long to be loved. Where do you find love? You find love in Jesus Christ. He says, "This is what love is. A man lays down his life for his friends. The Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep. I love you." I'm convinced that if Christian women and young ladies could understand the reality of this, there would be no need for these romance novels. Seriously. Christian writers come along and they try to even appeal to that. *But the husband/wife relationship is supposed to be the knight in shining armor coming and delivering the damsel in distress.* I want you to understand that the fulfillment of all of that fairytale doesn't happen in this life, but it happened in Jesus Christ. You want someone to love you, and to come after you, and to care about you, and to do whatever it takes to save you? He already has done it, and the more that you drink that in, the less you will need of that nonsense, and the more you will treasure reality.

Men want to be respected. Men want to feel significant. You long to be significant. You're reaching midlife and you're having a midlife crisis because all of your dreams have not been realized. You want to feel like you matter. You matter, and you find out how much you matter in Jesus Christ. I mean, think about this. He calls these disciples and appoints them, and He says, "You're on mission with Me to accomplish things for eternity." What's it matter where you are in your corporation? You are about eternity. And think about this, young men, and it's true for all of us. There's something about maleness and femaleness where there's a little different side of our needs. We need all of these things. That's why it says, "Husbands, love your wives." It doesn't say, "Wives, love your husband." It says, "Wives, respect your husbands," right? A man needs respect.

Think about this. You want to feel significant? You want to feel worthwhile? Ponder and meditate on the fact that the New Testament teaches that though we have to come to Christ realizing we're nothing, right? We have to realize we're sinful. There's no hope in us. But then He takes us and lifts us up off the ground, and one day it will be said we will experience glorification with Christ. You will be glorified with Him. Can you imagine what that means? If you want to feel significant, wrap up all of your desires for significance into Jesus Christ and realize the fact that He has called you. He's destined you. He has given you a destiny of sharing in His glory. Everything is found in Him.

If you long to be free from worry and fear, if your life is out of control, if circumstances come one after another crashing in upon you, if the storms of life are overwhelming you, then read in the Gospels and see the One who when He was in the middle of the sea, and the ship was tossed by the storm, and the waves were overwhelming them, and the disciples feared for their life, He stood up and said, "Peace be still!" and suddenly the wind stopped. Suddenly the waves calmed. Suddenly they were at the other side of the lake. Jesus is the answer.

If you're in pain, great distress, and you need a friend, you need someone who understands you, have you felt this? Have you not felt this: The times when you were hurting in a way that you wanted to communicate with someone to understand, and you had friends maybe who wanted to try to understand, but they couldn't understand what you were going through? And in your pain and distress, there was this longing, "I long to be loved and understood at the same time. No one understands what I'm going through." In Hebrews 2:14-18, the author says, "Look at Jesus." Listen to these words:

Hebrews 2:14 ~ Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives.

He has to take on flesh and blood to deliver us. But look what He says beyond that:

Hebrews 2:16 ~ For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham.

He came to help us.

Hebrews 2:17 ~ Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 18 For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted.

He's been tested, and because He's been tested, He's able to come to the aid of those who are being tested. In fact, chapter 4 says we don't have a High Priest (verse 15) who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses. Sometimes the word sympathy has lost its meaning for us. It sort of means pity, but it doesn't mean that in the original. It means to feel with. We have a High Priest who can feel with us.

Why? Because whatever you're going through He has been through it, and I would submit to you that when you rightly understand all that the Bible tells you about Jesus, that no matter how great your pain, He has experienced the exact same kind of pain, but to a greater degree. And so when you come to Jesus with your pain, you find someone who understands. He was a Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He learned obedience through the things He suffered. Read through Hebrews if you need to find a Friend who understands you, and you will find a Friend who sticks closer than a brother. You will find in Him a compassionate, merciful High Priest who knows, and who understands, and who loves.

You go through circumstances and you think, "I've had those and I've found Him." What God wants to do is through every part and every moment of your life, for you to be able to say that in a deeper way, to be able to say tomorrow, "I've found Him." *But you already found Him.* "I found more of the riches of His glory. I found Him." That's the glory of our Savior. It never will get old. And no matter what your need, He's the answer.

It even goes into the struggles with sin, how Satan deceives us in this, how our own flesh works against us in this. We struggle with sin, we want to be pure. If you're truly His, you can't be happy and sin. Sure you struggle with sin. Sure you battle with sin. Until the day you die, you will, and in a sense, the struggle becomes more intense, not because you're doing more and more wicked things. No, the opposite is true. You're doing less and less wicked things over time, but what you're doing you see with greater clarity how ugly and offensive and vile it is.

I love the illustration Jerry Bridges uses in his book *Discipline of Grace*. He says that what happens in a true Christian's life is that as we walk with God, the Lord brings a light into our souls, as it were, and He helps us to start cleaning things up. He says imagine you walk into a room that's dimly lit, really dimly lit, and you can see, but it's dimly lit. You can tell that the cushions are all up on the sofa and no newspapers are on the floor. It looks pretty good. This is a new Christian or a Christian along the way, and they say, "Hey, look how great things look." Now imagine that you turn that dimmer switch and you begin to turn it up a little bit. Not all the way, but just up a little bit. What do you see? Now you notice there's a stain in the carpet. Now you notice that there's some funky stuff on the wall. What looked to be clean, now you see it with greater clarity. What is that stain? Man, that's nasty.

You see, you're actually getting cleaner, but what you're seeing, because the light's getting brighter, you're more abhorrent of. "I can't believe it. I didn't even know this stuff was in here." That's what happens in the life of a Christian. Now, what happens is the Lord turns up the dimmer through His word, as we read His word, as we interact with other Christians and they say, "Ty, I see you've got a problem that you don't see. I don't think you see this. It's a blind spot." So they tell me about it, and that's the Lord turning up the light on this area—reading the word, seeing that I'm stumbling and stumbling, and why do I keep stumbling?

What we have to see is that even in our need for purity, Jesus is all we need. What do I mean by that? Whatever sin you struggle with, whatever difficulty you are encountering, He is the answer, and He has come, and the gospel is this, that He died to save you from the penalty of sin, yes, but He also died to save you from the power of sin. It is through His death that you now have the Spirit of God living in you, and the more that you learn in your need to look at Christ, to follow after Him, now what's that mean? Okay, you're tempted to sin. You're struggling with a particular sin, and what happens is the thought comes into your mind, the temptation, "I think I want to do this. I want to get angry. I want to yell, because I'm so irritated. I'm going to let them know how I feel because they need to understand this." That's the temptation, and we're so used to giving into it, right? Before we know it, we've said something.

Well, the Lord wants us to say, "Wait a minute. No, that's not right. I can't do this." But what happens a lot of times is we try to overcome our sin over here on our own. It's like the Lord's over there, and I'm thinking, "Oh no, here I go again. I can't do that. What's wrong with me?" This is good so far, but what happens is if I sit here and try to work on my sin on my own, what happens? I sin. I've got no power. I can say, "I don't want to, I don't want to, I don't want to," but I don't have the power to be free unless I look at Christ. What we're supposed to do is say, "I don't want to, I don't want to, I don't want to," and we're to memorize Scripture that says like: "*Put off and lay aside all anger and clamor and wrath and slander, along with all malice. Lay those things aside and put on—be kind, tender-hearted toward one another (Ephesians 4:31-32). Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, just as God also in Christ forgave you.*" The secret is that you don't just think about what you need to put off and what you need to put on. You do that, but you go the next step and you look at Christ. That's what Ephesians 4:32 says:

Ephesians 4:32 ~ Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.



Paul is saying, “Look at Jesus.” You’re having trouble being angry? You’re having trouble speaking hurtful words? Yes, stop it. But it doesn’t stop there. And put on good things, but the only way you’re going to do that is by looking at Jesus. You look at Christ, and you see the Gospel, and you see how tender He is with me, how patient, how kind He is to me. I can’t believe You’re kind to me. Even when I’m sitting here ready to blow up over something that’s not important, and here You are kind and tender-hearted. When I look at Your face, I see kindness, and tender-heartedness extended at that moment, and that is then reflected in my life. When you’re looking at Christ, you will find the power and the sufficiency to walk in holiness. He is everything we need. He is our righteousness.

The Old Testament Yahweh-Tsidkanu, the Lord our righteousness, one of the great names from the Old Testament, how it’s fulfilled in Jesus, hanging on the cross and now victorious, He’s our righteousness. A disciple is known by what he follows after and by what he finds out, and if you make your passion to follow after Jesus, to know Him—and we forget, don’t we? We find ourselves continually forgetting to follow after Him. We’re following other things. Well, stop it. Don’t be a Martha, worried about so many things. Remember what Jesus said to her? “Only one thing matters. Follow after Me,” and if you follow after Him, and you follow after Him, you will keep finding, and finding, and finding the treasure of who He is.

Let’s go to Him in prayer...

Our Father, we stand in awe of You, Your amazing kindness. You told us in the Old Testament that You in Your essential being are the Lord, the Lord, compassionate and gracious, abounding in lovingkindness, slow to anger, forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin. You told us all of those things, Lord, and yet it’s so hard to believe, because we know how sinful we are. We know how much we deserve Your punishment, Your wrath, and we’re so thankful that You who are holy and righteous are also merciful and compassionate. Thank You that we see that supremely in the person of Your glorious Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. What a Friend. Father, our prayer is that You would help those in this room who do not know You personally, to put off the foolishness of living for themselves and living for their own agenda, and they’d realize how futile it is that it will not satisfy, that the only way their hearts will know satisfaction is to come to Jesus. Let them turn from their sin now and plead with You, and they will find in You a welcome, a loving embrace. No matter how black our sins are, Lord, when we look at Christ, He beckons us, “Come,” and He’s mighty to save. Let no one today turn away from Christ.

Lord, for those who already have a real relationship with You, who are your disciples, yet we're so forgetful, Lord, help us. Forgive us. We've listened to the charms of this world. We've listened to the ideas of this sin-sick society we live in, and we've prioritized other things more than we should. Lord, call us back to Yourself. Let us hear You saying, "Follow Me," and let us follow hard after Jesus. We thank You that the One who calls us is able to do that, that You give us the sufficiency that we can come to You even saying today, "Lord, I wish I wanted that more than I want." Even as we come, we can see in Jesus our sufficiency there, because He always longed to do the will of His Father. Jesus, be that for me. We praise You, oh God, for the great salvation that You've given to us, and we pray that You would help us be people who are more and more grateful, more and more filled with Your joy, so that You might be glorified. We pray in Jesus' Name, Amen.

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