

Pursuing Jesus

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[0 : 0 0] Good morning. Take out your Bibles with me, please, and turn to the Gospel of Luke, chapter 14.

We will be looking at the second half of chapter 14, where Jesus addresses his words now to the large crowd that has been following him.

And after he addresses his words to this large crowd, Luke doesn't mention a large crowd again until we get to Jerusalem.

So much for building a big crowd, huh? So let us first hear his word, then we'll ask the Lord to make it so we can grasp it, and then we will dig in.

So if you're able, please stand as I read from Luke, chapter 14, beginning of verse 25 through verse 35, whatever the end is.

[1 : 1 2] Luke 14, 25. Now, great crowds were accompanying him, and he turned and said to them, If anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own soul, he cannot be my disciple.

Whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build the tower, does not first sit down and count the cost, whether he has enough to complete it?

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

Or what king, going out to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and deliberate whether he is able with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000?

And if not, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks for terms of peace.

[2 : 5 6] So, therefore, any one of you who does not renounce all that he has cannot be my disciple.

Salt is good, therefore. But if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored?

It is of no use either for the soil or for the manure pile. It is thrown away. He who has ears, let him hear.

So reads his word. Let us pray. Let us pray. Father, open our eyes that we may behold wonderful things from your word.

Make us to understand the way of your precepts and we will meditate on your wondrous works. Teach us, O Lord, the way of your statutes and we will keep it to the end.

[4 : 0 2] Cause us to understand that we may keep your word and observe it with all our heart. Lead us in the path of your words, for we delight in it.

Incline our heart to your testimonies and not to selfish gain. Turn away our eyes from looking at worthless things and revive us in your ways.

Behold, we long for your precepts. Revive us through your righteousness, which is found in Christ.

This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Please be seated. Let's start with some questions, some thought questions.

What is a Christian? What would you say if somebody asked you what a Christian was? What would you say? What's a Christian? A follower of Christ.

[5 : 10] A follower of Christ. Okay. What else? Christ-like. I looked, I was curious because I, Jesus keeps saying disciple, disciple, disciple.

Although we don't use that term much today. We use the word Christian usually or believer. I looked up different dictionaries and they define a Christian as one who professes belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ.

Or another one had one who adheres to Christianity. Another one had one who follows the religion of Christ. Those are the dictionary definitions of a Christian.

None of them had the etymology of the word, which James mentioned is Christ-like. So many today claim to be a Christian, yet most of them do not put Christ first in their life, like he says here.

They do not suffer for Christ or renounce all they have to follow him. So I want to ask a question. So is there a difference between Jesus' term disciple and our term Christian?

[6 : 35] Is there a difference? Is there, do you think that there is a different level? Do you start as a Christian and then later have the option to opt in to be a disciple?

I was brought up with that. Until I read John MacArthur's book, The Gospel According to Jesus, and that just said, okay, the Bible doesn't make a distinction.

In fact, the word Christian, the title Christian, first appears in the New Testament in Acts chapter 11, where it says, the disciples were first called Christians, little Christ, in Antioch.

So in other words, the term Christian didn't come along until later, and it was associated with those who were already disciples. They were all known as disciples of Jesus.

So the more important question is, what's a disciple? So the Bible doesn't see a distinction. If you're a Christian, you're a disciple.

[7 : 52] So what Jesus is saying here is not an optional extra level you can opt in for. It is, if you put your name with me, this is what your life looks like.

And so we read or hear these words of Jesus, we're kind of going, you know, three times. He says, you cannot be my disciple. Cannot be my disciple. Cannot be my disciple. It's like, ooh, ah, whoa.

No wonder the crowd's thinned. So we want to ask some questions here. A few, I titled this Pursuing Jesus instead of titling it Following Jesus or Who is Jesus' Disciple?

I titled it Pursuing because he says in verse 27, whoever does not bear his own cross and come after me. In other words, pursue me.

Cannot be my disciple. So I think it's about pursuing him. And I think if we, I think that's better terminology than following. Pursuing him, I think is what he wants.

[9 : 10] See? And I think few people today pursue Jesus. And I think that's why Christianity today has lost its saltiness. Its distinctiveness.

And I think that's what Jesus is addressing. He has a great crowd following him. We notice that verse 25. Luke tells us great crowds were journeying with him.

They're going along with him. They're just kind of accompanying him. They're not necessarily following and learning. They're not pursuing him. They're just kind of coming along for the show.

Yeah, give those Pharisees another one, Jesus. Knock them out. Because he's been doing quite a bit of that. Point out their hypocrisy. And so now he turns to them and points out the crowd's hypocrisy.

Who follows me? Who do I want following me? What am I looking for? See, to be a Christian is to be like Christ.

[10 : 14] So if you're going to be his disciple, then it means you make the same kind of commitments that he does. You walk like he did. And these are the kind of things he did.

So he speaks these words to a large crowd. He's clarifying who is his disciples. He's not interested in casual followers.

He's not interested in building a crowd. He's absolutely not interested in numbers. He's interested in souls. And he's interested in those who pursue him.

So why does he say these things to the large crowd? In chapter, back in chapter 9 of Luke, he had said things like this to his disciples.

He said, if you're going to come after me, you must deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow me. So he'd already talked in this language before to his 12. But now he says it to the large crowd because he wants no confusion among the masses.

[11 : 26] He wants no speculation about what it is to be a Christian or be a disciple of Jesus. He doesn't want just followers.

He wants those who pursue him, who pursue him. And I mean pursue him like that.

He is the treasure of life. He is the great pearl. He is what you, if you find the treasure in the field, you dig it up, then you sell everything you have by that because that's worth more than anything else.

He wants that. That's what he wants. So what does it look like to pursue Jesus? So now we've talked about crowds. Let's talk about disciples, what his definition is.

What does it mean to be a true Christian? What does it mean to be a true disciple? Because I think they're the same thing. So as always, we divide our messages in two.

[12 : 33] Just it's easy because I can count that high. So two. So we have the part where he describes his followers, his disciples.

So we have three statements in verse 26, 27, and 33, right? Who can be his disciple? So we have three descriptions. And then we have three pictures or illustrations or clarifications also.

So in verses 28 through 32, he gives a couple of pictures, building a tower and going to war. And then he talks about salt. And it's all together because he ties it together with his language.

It's all the same message. It's about following him. So let's look at the descriptions first. What does it mean? How does he describe it? And he gives three descriptions, but let's see if I can try to summarize it or synopsise it.

Is that a word? Put it into one statement. A true Christian, what it means to be a true Christian or a true disciple, has an undivided and sacrificial love for Jesus.

[13 : 51] It's a love for Jesus that is undivided and sacrificial. So three statements. So verse 26 is the first statement. He says, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father, mother, wife, and children, brothers, and sisters, and yes, even his own soul.

I know a translation has life there, but Jesus uses words intentionally. And he says soul. His own soul. His affections.

His deep down self. Okay. So I've listed these three statements so that there's kind of, you know, I got that OCD thing about having to have all things start with P's.

So you got a preeminent relation, a persevering process, and a purposeful separation. What does that mean? Well, the first one, preeminent relationship. In other words, Jesus is first. An undivided love for him.

And he says that by comparison. If you don't hate his own family. So what's that? That's shocking language, right?

[15 : 08] I mean, other, Jesus obviously is not saying you don't honor your parents. Because he has remarked on that in other places. No, we don't avoid, we honor our parents.

Tell death. And then we love our wife. Paul says, love your wives as Christ loved the church. So he's not saying don't love your wife and children. What does he mean?

Well, it's hyperbole. I love using fancy words. What's that mean? It's like an exaggerated parable.

Parable is a parable. Hyperbole is an exaggerated. Hyper. Hyperbole is an exaggerated. It's an exaggeration.

So what he's saying is your love for Jesus is so dominant. That all others are far second. Compared to him.

[16 : 14] He takes preeminent. That's why I say preeminent relation. He is preeminent. It is an undivided love. In a sense. So this is biblical language.

When Jesus says hate. The audience would understand. The Jewish audience would understand that language. He doesn't mean hate. He's being hyperbolic. He is exaggerating.

What he means is less than. If you don't love your family less than me. You can't be my disciple. So back in Genesis 29.

When. When. When. Remember. Good old Jacob. He had. He. He. He loved Rachel. But then he got Leah. Remember that? And so.

The text tells us that. Jacob loved Rachel. More than Leah. And then the next verse says. God saw that. Jacob loved.

[17 : 14] Rachel. But hated Leah. See by comparison. His love for Rachel. Was so far superior. That's the one he really wanted. That's the one. Remember he worked 14 years.

For this. Wife. He loved her. Leah. Didn't mean he really hated her.

He certainly took care of her. She was even his covenant wife. That he was buried with. Not Rachel. But in biblical language.

This means more than. Okay. If you don't. By comparison. Hate your family. Compared to your love for me. You can't be my disciple. Literally. You're not able to be.

My disciple. Secondly. He says in verse 27. Whoever. Does not bear his own cross. And come after me. Pursue me. Cannot be my disciple.

[18 : 12] Is not able. Does not have the capacity. The one who's not willing to bear his own cross. Does not have the capacity. To be my disciple.

He's not saying. I don't think he's saying able. In an absolute sense. Because none of us are able. Right. But I think he's saying. Just the innate. If you're divided.

And you're not willing to suffer. If you're not willing to bear your own cross. You don't have it. You don't even have the basic ability.

Follow me. So what does he mean by. Bear your own cross. Well. Cross is that. What does cross mean? It means death.

Death. So back in Luke 9. 23. He says. If you want to follow me. You must what? Deny yourself. Take up your cross.

- [19 : 14] Follow me. So deny yourself. Take up your cross. Same thing. Self-denial. Die to self. Take your cross. Now it's interesting. Isn't it? So he's talking about. Suffering.
- He's talking about. Those that hate you. And who scorn. He's talking about trials. And hardships. Right. All kinds of persecutions. And whatever. But isn't it interesting. That he says. You bear your own cross.
- Bear your own. In other words. The implication is. Each one of us. Who follow Jesus. Jesus gives to each of us. Our own particular. Cross. To bear.
- Our own trials. Our own sufferings. That are individualized to you. It is. It is. It is. It is. It is. Because Romans 8.28 says what?
- All things. All things. Work together for good. To those who love God. And are called according to his purpose. What's the next verse say?
- [20 : 15] What's his purpose? Yes. That he has a wonderful plan for your life. That he might conform you to the image of his son.
- All things work together for good. For those who love God. Who pursue God. First and foremost. Right. Because he works it according to his purpose.
- And his purpose for each one of you. Is to conform you to the image of his son. How does that happen? Well to walk the same way he walked. To bear your own cross.
- I don't bear the cross that Jesus bore. You don't bear the cross that Jesus bore. But I have a cross to bear. You ever hear that statement? I think it comes from the same people that says bless their heart.
- That's my cross to bear. You know. So and so. He's my cross to bear. I don't know that it means that. Cross means suffering.
- [21 : 16] Some kind of suffering. It could be health. It could be situation. It could be family. It could. Whatever the difficult. I died himself. It's something that requires me to die.
- Okay. Isn't that interesting? He gives us our own tribulations. That make us like Christ. Because how he leads in your life.
- Is different than how he leads in my life. Because he made you different than me. And so. But the goal is still the same. To conform you to be like Christ.
- Christ. So how he does that. With each of you. And how he does that with me. Is going to be totally. Different. So.
- Then he has a third one. In verse 33. A purposeful separation. He says. And here. Notice verse 34. Starts with a therefore. Therefore. Which means.
- [22 : 20] He's. He's making a conclusion. Right. Based on what he said before. Now. There. Here's a summary. Here's a conclusion. Here's an application. So. Therefore. Any of you. Who does not renounce all that he has.
- Cannot be my disciple. Does not have the ability. To be my disciple. So. The therefore statement there. This is a summary. So. To renounce all means. That.
- That takes in the first one. In verse 26. That takes in. Loving Jesus more than any other relationship. It takes in verse. Verse 27. To renounce all means.
- To be willing to carry your own cross. Because I've renounced everything else. Jesus is all that matters. I'm pursuing Jesus. And that's all that matters.
- In the depth of my heart. So true. Christian. Disciple. Is one.
- [23 : 14] Who has an undivided. And sacrificial. Love. For Jesus. And he's willing to give up. All. Now the question. The important question is.
- Why? Why would we do this? Why would we do this? Who wants to choose? Who's. This kind of life. When I make Jesus a priority over family.

That has some implications. In my family. When I choose to carry my own cross. That has implications in my life.

So why would I do it? What makes us willing to sacrifice? Well I think Paul says it best. Paul knew all about sacrifice.

He knew all about carrying his own cross. I'm glad I don't carry Paul's cross. Oh my. What a cross he bore. Here's how he says it in Philippians 3.

[24 : 20] We love this statement. But he puts it in a way that we get it. Oh that's why he did it. So he says whatever gain I had.

And he had already in that chapter said it. You know I was Pharisee. Pharisees. And you know I have all this lineage. And I had this heritage. And I had this position. And I was striving for more position.

And success in his Judaism. He was a rising star. He said so whatever gain I had. All of that I've counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

What does that mean Paul? Indeed I count everything as loss. Why? Because of the surpassing value of what?

Knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. Lord. And by knowing there he does not mean a word for academic knowledge.

[25 : 25] He means the word of intimacy. I have come to know him. I have a relationship with him. The value of knowing him.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things. And not just I'm not complaining. And I count them. I count them. Count the car.

I count them as rubbish. Compared to him. In order that I may gain Christ. And be found in him. Not having a righteousness of my own. That comes from the law.

But that which comes through faith in Christ. The righteousness from God that depends on faith. I gain righteousness through faith.

That I. Again. That I may know him. That I may know him. Oh what does that mean? And then the power of his resurrection. I'm all for that. Don't you want to know the power of his resurrection?

[26 : 23] Yeah. I want to know some of that. Give me some of that with my depression. Give me some of that with my depression. And share that I may know the power of his resurrection.

And may share his sufferings. Oh. Come on Paul. Yeah. That I may share his sufferings. Becoming like him. There it is. Becoming like him. Becoming a Christian.

Becoming like him. In his death. That by any means possible I may attain the future. The future hope. I may attain to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I've already obtained this.

Or I'm already perfect. I haven't arrived. But I press on to make it my own. Because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Jesus made me his own.

So I want to make him my own. So I think that's what Jesus is talking about here.

[27 : 23] A true Christian has a love for Jesus. That's preeminent on him. And that is willing to be sacrificial. Whatever that means. To lose all to gain him. Because of the value of a deeper knowing of him.

And the gift that he gives through the cross. Right? That I've been made righteous through faith. I haven't earned. I haven't deserved. But I've been given this gift of righteousness.

Through faith. And because of this. If you have received. If you have been forgiven. And received the righteousness from Christ through faith.

Then what keeps you from pursuing him. As chief of all. That's. Because of this. We love him. With an undivided and sacrificial.

Love. So that's the first part. Three descriptions. Now. Let's look at the illustrations. How does he clarify this? So a true Christian. Has an undivided and sacrificial love for Jesus.

[28 : 27] So. To clarify then that further. With these illustrations. Being a Christian disciple. Involves. A decisive.

And enduring. Allegiance to Christ. What these pictures point out. These pictures of a building. And a. And a battle. And then salt. Clarify that being a Christian disciple.

Involves a decisive. Because I count the cost. And an enduring. Allegiance to Christ. Because I finish. Building.

I finish. I don't lose my saltiness. So let's look at these three pictures. One is a calculation.

To build. There's a determination. Whether I should go to war. And then a degeneration. The salt that becomes. That loses its taste. So. So.

[29 : 25] So. So. Verse 28. He gives the first illustration. And he's explaining. Notice. Verse 27. Where he says. Bearing your own cross. For.

Look. Verse 28. For. So. The for. Tells us. He's explaining further. What it means to bear your own cross. For. For which of you. Desiring to build a tower. Does not. First.

Sit down. And count the cost. Whether he's able. Whether he has enough. To complete it. That's the issue. If I'm going to. Follow Christ.

Have I. Counted the cost. Have I looked at it. Have I. Have I. See. Do. Do. Do. Do. It's not about how I start following Jesus. It's how I finish.

Do I see it as a. Is a. Is a long. Following. It's about finishing.

[30 : 19] Do I have enough to finish. The question of perseverance. It's a call to follow Jesus. Not about how you start. But how you. Finish. So. This reminds me.

Not finishing. Reminds me. Remember of the parable of the sower. Back in Luke. Eight. Remember. There's the. There's the. Road. Seed.

Right. Doesn't go anywhere. Then there's the. Rocks. With no root. Right. And it starts to grow. But then it. You know. Sun. Sun kills it. And then there's the. In the weeds. The thorns. Right. It grows.

But then it's choked out. Right. So this reminds me of those. So. So. Jesus said back in Luke 8. 13. The ones on the rock. Right.

The seeds that fall on the rock. Are those who. When they hear the word. Receive it with joy. They. They. They like the initial thing. They start. With Jesus. But. They have no root. So they believe for a while.

[31 : 16] But in a time of testing. They fall away. Right. So testing comes. The real measure of whether you follow Jesus. The testing comes. And it's like. I'm out. Then the thorns.

So the ones that fell among the thorns. Are those. Who hear. But as they go on their way. Are choked by the cares. And the riches. And pleasures of life. And the fruit does not mature.

So they don't bear fruit. So that's what it reminds me of. Those that through time and testing. Fall away. And those who. Because of the cares of the world. They.

They. They. They. You know. They're following Jesus. They believe for a while. They're there. But then. You know. They're. They're. I want all the other stuff too. Which is the opposite of what Jesus says.

His disciples. Do. So the second picture. The battle. Verse 31. So. Or. He says. Who. Who. Who.

- [32 : 11] Does. First. Count the cost of building. A tower. Verse 31. Or what king. Going out to encounter another king in war. Will not. Sit down. First.
- And deliberate. Whether he's able with 10,000 to meet him. Who comes against him with 20,000. Be a fool. Be a foolish. King. Wouldn't it to go out against a king.
- With twice the forces. Right. And be. Wiser to. To. Send an envoy. And get terms of peace. But how does this picture relate to what Jesus is saying?
- The first one is. Is. Clear. Right. If you're going to build a tower. You count the cost. If I'm going to follow Jesus. I count the cost. Right. So what's this one about? What's this picture?
- This battle. Who's. Who's the king and who's the other king? If I'm the king. Who's going out.
- [33 : 05] Out against another king. That's superior to me. He's the enemy king. What do I do? Now. Smart to sit down and figure out.
- What can I do it? To determine if I. If I'm able to fight. And here's the basic determination.
- Both of those pictures. Of the. The tower. Counting the cost of the tower. And determining to go into battle. Both talk about first. Sitting down. And either counting the cost.
- Or determining. So. So. Take a measure of what you're doing. And the very basic. Connection to following Jesus is. Following Jesus is going to involve war.
- Okay. It's not just about building a tower. Not just about building the body of Christ. Christ. That's our building. But it's going to war.
- [34 : 08] And if you're going to follow Jesus. You need to know that when you follow Jesus. The other side is going to be. Is going to outnumber you quite a bit.
- Okay. Because few follow Jesus. Many don't. Right. And if you're going into a battle. Who's the enemy king? Do you want to make terms of peace with him?
- If that's who the king is. No. I'd rather go into the battle. Overmatched. At least in numbers. But we've learned as we read through the Bible.
- That when God goes to war. He usually likes little numbers. Doesn't he? Gideon. You know. Joshua. He likes little numbers. Not everybody's a David.
- David. Because he gets the credit. When we go into war. We go against an enemy. Who's far more powerful than us. Way smarter than us.
- [35 : 11] Okay. So you're not going to outthink him. How are you going to beat him? On low work. Resist him. Not in my strength.
- Huh? Be strong in the Lord. In the strength of his might. Put on the armor of God. Not the armor of Bill. Put on God's righteousness.
- God. All that's his. That's why it's good. Mine has holes in it. Falling apart. It's rusted. Breastplate doesn't fit anymore.
- I got too big. It's like. So. So the issue. I think in this second picture. Of determining to battle.
- The issue is pursue. Is that. In terms of following Jesus. Pursuing Jesus. Is going to be hard. It's going to be a battle. There's going to be a war. And there's an enemy. That you're going against.
- [36 : 07] A strong enemy. And the cost. Will mean. It will take. A toll on you. How many have been in this battle. For a while. Has it taken a toll. Still fighting though.
- Aren't you. But it takes a toll. Not the same. As when you first started. The battle.

Go take them on. Now I'm going to. Let's just pray. Kind of. Kind of get wiser too. In terms of how you battle. Okay.

So then the third picture. Is interesting. And it. It's also. A conclusion. So verse 33. Has a conclusion. Right. The third. The third. Description. Was.

You know. So renounce all. That's a summary. Of your commitment. Now. In verse 34. The therefore. Is not there. But it is.

[37 : 08] When Jesus said it. It was there. So. Before he introduces. The salt picture. He says. Therefore. In other words. The salt picture. Is going to be.

A conclusion. An application. Of all the rest. So he's not just. You know. Oh by the way. Salt's good. You know. Like a separate lesson. It's a therefore.

So it's. It's. It's another conclusion. So he says. Salt. Salt is good. Salt's good. By good. He means. It's beneficial. Useful. You can put it.

You know. You can use it. For various. Things. In fact. In that day. There were three. Functions. Of salt. The primary function. Was a preservative. Because they didn't have. Refrigerators. So they preserved food.

With salt. Secondly. They. If they wanted. They could season. You know. Salt. Is. That's how we know of it. Today. Is to season things.

[38 : 03] And then third. Is to. Fertilize. You know that. They used it for. Fertilize. That's why he refers to. In verse 35. About. You know. It's not even good for the soil. But. But. But impure salt.

That's still salty. Is good for fertilizing. Now if you overdo it. You can make it go barren. So you don't want to do that. Right Diane. You don't want to overdo. You don't want to over salt. But if you over salt your food. It's not good either.

So. But a little bit helps. A little bit helps. In fact. One of the main functions. They used it for. Was when they baked. They. They put on the bottom.

They put salt. All over the bottom. Of the. Of the oven. And then they. Put their burning stuff. Which was manure. In there. And then that salt. Would help.

Help it. Work. The combination of. The manure. And the. And the salt. Had a wonderful effect. On what you're baking. I imagine.

[38 : 59] But. But. Over time. But over time. I don't know how that works. Over time. I guess an old cowboy. Do about. You know. Put the cow pies. In the. But over time.

The salt. Would degenerate. As he had to clean out the oven. Put in new salt. Why was that? Well. In. In. In Palestine. The first century. They had one source. Of salt.

Where do you think they got it? The Dead Sea. There's all kinds of salt. In the Dead Sea. But that salt's impure. It's not pure salt. Like we have. In our little salt shakers. Pure salt doesn't degenerate.

But impure salt does. What I've read. Not a scientist. So. I defer to any science guys. And so.

It's only going to last a while. That's why Jesus says. Once the salt becomes saltless. Tasteless. It's. It's no longer useful. It's no longer. You just throw it out.

[39 : 58] It's not even good for. What does he say? It's not even good for the manure pile. I mean. At least when it's got a little bit of salt. It's still good for the manure pile. Manure pile. Or for the soil.

It's not good. So he just throw it out. So what's the picture? What's the picture? Well. Again. Following Jesus. If we're going to start following him.

And then we're going to fall away. We're going to lose our saltiness. Then we become useless as followers of Christ. If we start following Jesus. And then.

We start looking at the cares of the world. And the anxieties of the world. And I get distracted. And that chokes me out. I lose my saltiness. Why am I following anymore? So if you're going to lose your saltiness.

Why bother? Count the cost. So what's the big picture question? Following Jesus is not a casual.

[40 : 55] Quest. And that's why I prefer the term. Pursuing. Pursuing Jesus. Because following him can mean.

You know. I'm following. But at a distance. Or I'm following. But I'm casual. Or I'm following. But I'm distracted. But pursuing is a whole different thing. Pursuing means.

He's it. He's my goal. He's my treasure. And if I'm thinking that way. Then I'm able.

To be his disciple. It does not mean. I'm perfect. It does not mean. That it's in my own strength. But I have. The right. Attitude.

I'm able. In spirit. Are you with me? I'm not saying. I'm able. Because you know. I can buck up. And do it.

[41 : 52] Because I'm years past that. I threw that. T-shirt away. Interesting.

When Jesus uses the word. The salt. Becomes. Loses its saltiness. It's the same word. For foolishness. So if the salt.

Becomes foolish. So you. Jesus said. Right. You are the salt. Of the earth. And if the salt. Becomes foolish. It's useless.

So if I become foolish. Then I think that helps us. In terms of. What's this salty thing about. If I'm the salt. Of the earth. But I become foolish. I'm useless. In following him. Foolish.

Because I fall away. In testing. Or because I. Get distracted. With other things. Or I never was. Really that committed. To come. I never really saw him.

[42 : 48] As the treasure. I just saw him. As an add-on. Lots of ways. To look at this. A lot of here. Isn't there? Did I go through it.

Pretty fast? Yes. I'm trying to get faster. So who's able? So there's that question.

Three times he says. You're not able to be my disciple. If you don't hate others compared to me. You're not able to be my disciple. If you don't bear your own cross.

You're not able to be my disciple. If you don't renounce everything you have. So who's able? Who can do this?

I mean when we first hear this. Right? When we read it. It's like. Please make this.

[43 : 46] Please pastor. Make this sound more doable. Because when I read it. Because I hear that statement from Jesus.

I say yeah. I'm the one who can't. I can't either. But see if I'm pursuing Jesus. What would I do? If his words slay me. But I'm still pursuing Jesus.

What would I do? What would you do? So if you don't. And I think most of you do. Don't feel able. Right? To really do what he calls us to do.

What do you do? Pray. I go to. Come to me all who are. Weary. Heavy laden. Right?

So I still pursue him. Make me able. Make me. I pray often. Some of the words from Psalm 119. Because they're. Lord. Make me walk.

[44 : 49] Cause my heart to incline. See. Because I'm asking him to do. What I can't do. Or Paul says it another way. In Philippians 2.13.

To. To. Do the willing and the working within us. For your good pleasure. Because he calls us to obey. And to do all this. To. To. To be involved.

But a lot of times I feel like. I don't have any energy left. So do the willing and the working. Work on my. Heart. And my soul. Do the willing and the working.

Within me for your good pleasure. Or. Psalm 51. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation. Or. What did we just pray this morning? What did we just pray?

Have we prayed it? From Psalm 51. Oh. I forget. I prayed all the time. Now it's gone. It's about the right spirit.

[45 : 48] Oh. Renew. Renew in me a right spirit. Cause my spirit's not right. Renew in me. And then sustain me with the willing spirit. Why? Because my spirit's not. Willing.

See. I love those kind of prayers. Because I can. Yeah. That's me. Leaning on him. Relying on him. I'm not able.

But he is able. So who is able? So. Let me read. Paul again. In 2nd Corinthians 4. He says. What we proclaim. Is not ourselves. But Jesus Christ is Lord.

With ourselves. As your servants. For Christ's sake. For God. Who said. Let light shine. Out of darkness. Has shown in our hearts. To give the light. Of the knowledge.

Of the glory of God. In the face. Of Christ Jesus. See it was God. Right? Remember Paul. On the Damascus road. It was all God. But we.

[46 : 45] Now. Now. We. We have this treasure. This Jesus. This treasure. We have this treasure. In jars. Of clay. What are jars of clay?

Any potters in here? They're fragile. They break. And then. You know. If I made it. It'd be. You know. We have this treasure.

In jars of clay. Why? To show. That the surpassing power. Belongs to God. And not to us. There you go. Who's able? The jar of clay.

That's in God's hands. Right? We are afflicted. Here we go. Here comes the cross. We are afflicted. In every way. But not crushed. We're perplexed.

We don't have it all figured out. But not driven to despair. We're persecuted. But not forsaken. Struck down. But not destroyed.

[47 : 46] Gosh Paul. It sounds pretty bad. But. He says. There's a but. Yeah. I'm carrying a cross. But I'm not out.

Because. The surpassing power. Belongs to God. And not to us. Right. We're always caring about. In the body. In the body. The death of Jesus. Just like Jesus. We're dying too.

See. We have this cross. So that the life of Jesus. Why are we caring about the body of death. Of the death. The body. In the body. The death of Jesus. So that the life of Jesus.

May also be manifested in our body. We have. We have the death. And the resurrection. In our lives. For we. Who live.

Are always being given over to death. For Jesus's sake. Why? So that. The life. Of Jesus. May also be manifested. In our mortal.

[48 : 46] Flesh. Why does God. Make us carry crosses. Because that's where he shows his life. In our death. When I am weak.

And I'm strong. Because of him. And it's not me. I don't get any of the credit. That's. The beauty. Of it. What's Jesus's point in all this?

It's not that we buck up. Oh I gotta be able. It's not that we resolve. By our own will. I'm gonna make a. I just have to be more loyal. I gotta make a better promise.

It's New Year's. I gotta make a new resolution. I'm gonna be a better Christian. How long does that last? Right? We're all old enough. That we know. Past that.

Right? Right? It's not that. Rather. It's that we pursue him. And we rely on him.

[49 : 51] And we look to him. If it's up to us. We all fail. Because the race is too long. And the battle is too hard. And the enemy is too strong.

But in Jesus. We are able to do. All things. We can endure the long race. We can fight the hard battle. And we can resist the strong enemy.

If you're a Christian. If you're a Christian. In other words. You are a disciple of Jesus.

Not just following. But pursuing him. It involves a decisive. And enduring allegiance. To him. He's my king.

We sang that. My king. My savior. My king. We were in the bank last week. The same bank. Where I met.

[50 : 47] Met. Eric. And he said. How you doing? And it was during COVID. And I said. My king is on his throne. That's how I'm doing. And I got.

We got to say it again. This week. Met somebody else. In the bank. Because Eric's. Moved on. And now it's. And. How you doing?

My king is on his throne. She's like. And we start talking about revelation. Oh it's interesting. You never know where those conversations are going to go. It's kind of my way of kind of opening the door.

See if there's any interest there. Little. Little. Hook. Maybe. Sorry. Being a disciple of Jesus Christ involves a decisive enduring allegiance.

To Christ. And we are able because. The power belongs to God and not to us. Let us pray. Father. Thank you for the words of Jesus that.

[51 : 52] That. That. Challenge us. That slay us. That. That confuse us. That. That. That make us think. Harder. Thank you for a Jesus that.

That. That doesn't. Give us a soft. Gospel. Doesn't give us a shallow. Gospel. Doesn't call us to a life of.

Of. Meaningless. Ease. That calls us to look beyond this life for the real life. And calls us to hold on to the one who is our life.

And therefore we renounce everything else that isn't our life. Help us endure in this. Father. Incline our hearts to your testimonies.

And not to selfish gain. This we pray in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.