

Luke 9:57-62

Sunday 10/12/2003

SEC: The Foundation of a Relationship with God

We have been coming through the Bible in the book of Nehemiah over the last three months, looking at how to build a church. We talked about all the outward and inward elements, the nine gates—nine being the number of fruitfulness in the Bible—that we need to have as a church. In the course of those three months, God brought a number of young couples and young singles into our church, and we had some people saved. I felt the burden to take some time on our next series and talk about how to build a relationship with the Lord.

When you hear that, the first thing that comes to your mind is, "I know what that means." I am not talking about just giving you the standard message on how to build a relationship with God. I am talking about going down to the very bedrock foundation and building principle upon principle, how you do that. We live in a day and age where there is a lot of confusion in the world and in Christianity. The confusion comes because, over time, things that were once stable become unstable.

The country we live in, which is a great country, is a long way from God, yet it started out close to God. There are only two nations in the history of the world that started out with God and the Word of God in their beginnings: one was the nation of Israel, and the other was the United States of America. No other nation in the history of the world started out with God and the Word of God at their beginning. Both did the same thing with it, and both wound up in apostasy. The reason that happens is because, through time, you lose things, and one of the things you lose is the definition of things the way God looks at it.

SEC: Understanding God's Definitions

I have taught you, and some of this is going to be repetitious, but just bear with me. I have told you before that when it comes to the Bible, you never look at the Bible from a Christian standpoint. You never look at history from a Christian standpoint. You have to look at the Bible and history from God's standpoint. You have to see it from what God is doing. God has a plan, and that plan is defined in the Word of God.

There are three plans that God has: God has a plan for the universe, God has a plan for planet Earth, and God has a plan for your life. They are all connected. The success of those plans, bottom line, rests on understanding God's definition of things. I always cringe a little bit when I hear a pastor start his message by saying, "The dictionary defines this word as..." I know that can be okay, but I also know this: there are some definitions in the dictionary that are not God's definitions.

I use the dictionary; I even have a Webster's 1828, one of the original first editions. Noah Webster was a great educator. He was a saved man. He is one of our Founding Fathers; most people do not know that. He wrote, and all of our Founding Fathers were teachers, and they wrote textbooks. They wrote textbooks because they realized that the thing that was going to keep America true to God was the definitions of God. So they wrote.

If you were to get an 1828 edition of Noah Webster's dictionary, you would find the word listed there, then the definition, and then you would also find the scripture references in the Bible where that word is used and how it is used. He understood that the Bible is the book of definitions. We have come to the place today in America, with all of our liberalism, that we have lost that. However the world goes, unfortunately, Christianity goes because it spills over, and when Christianity loses its punch, the world falls apart.

As the Bible said, Christ said, "We are the salt of the earth," and as salt, we preserve things. When the salt loses its savor, when we lose the preserving factor, as the church has done, then the world just goes to pieces. We need to start our series today, and we are going to be in it for a while. I am going to bring you from the beginning to the end. I am even going to show you how to take principles in the Bible as promises and apply them to your life. I have a whole study laid out for you that we are going to go through.

When we are done, the only reason you will not know how to build a working relationship with God—and that is the key, that is the key, that is the key—is because you do not want one. I do not believe that about anybody here. I believe you all want to do what is right. You may be struggling with things, you may have decisions to make, but the bottom line is I believe in everybody's character in our church right now, and I believe that everybody wants to do what is right. In that, we are very unique.

My job as a pastor is to make sure that you get everything you need from God. My standard offer is, and always will be, that I will sit down an hour a week with anybody. You do not even have to be a member of this church. I will sit down with you an hour a week and help you understand the Bible one on one. That is my job. In doing that, my primary goal is to help you understand definitions. Definitions are the key: defining things in your life and my life the way God defines them.

SEC: The Changing Values of Society

I look at the world we live in, the Christian world. I look at it a lot like Kmart. I could get by in life with no other stores if I just had a big Kmart. Kmart has everything. Sam Walton was a saved man, and his concept of Kmart was genius as far as I am concerned. When you go into Kmart, the super ones, you look down there and there are 120 checkouts both ways. Kmart is as big as the state of Nebraska. It is just forever. You have food, clothes, everything you need. You walk in there, and everybody is just scanning things across. The technology is unbelievable. You can even check your own cell phone.

It is all because they have the values of everything already on a little deal. You do not have to ask anybody how much this is. If you do, they just swipe you, and they tell you right off the bat. These guys walk around with little guns that do this. "How much is it? \$6." What technology! I always wanted to do this: two days before Christmas, when it was closed, take all the barcodes and change them. Where you bought a pair of socks for \$0.99, they now cost you \$349. The microwave combination slash TV, DVD, or BVD, or whatever the case may be, now costs you \$0.99.

I thought to myself, I would like to just stand back and watch the chaos. Here it is, two days before Christmas. You go to JCPenney at seven o'clock in the morning; they are not even open. Walmart at six o'clock, it is packed. Everybody is there. They bring buses of people in. It is packed. I would just stand back in the corner and watch the absolute utter confusion transpire because somebody went in and changed all the barcodes. By doing that, they changed all the values of things. The greatest technology in the world cannot undo what somebody could do by just changing the barcodes and the value systems.

That is exactly what has happened in America. While God's people slept in this ultra-tech society where you can send emails online around the world in seconds, while you can do all kinds of things and have your own satellite dish, or you can call and see anything you want, do anything you want, go anywhere you want in minutes and hours, whatever. While we slept, the devil came in and changed the barcode on everything. Now, what was once valuable is not, and what was once not valuable is now held up as invaluable. It is confusing, and it is especially true in Christianity.

SEC: Defining "Disciple"

I want to begin by talking to you about some definitions of things. I want to start with the absolute most important things that you need to understand, because, let us face it, in Christianity, we talk a lot and we say a lot of things without saying anything. Most pastors today know a lot about the Bible, but most pastors today do not know the Bible. Most Christians know a lot about the Bible because they read a lot of people's books, but they do not read the one book that really teaches them, so consequently, they do not know the Bible.

What happens is, we get a lot of things in Christianity that are spiritual things. We get a lot of things in Christianity that are "Christian" things, but we get very few things in life from the Bible that are biblical and scriptural. My job is nothing more than to make sure what you get is biblical and scriptural, and it is the bottom-line, lowest common denominator of the meaning. So when you walk out of here and you put it in your heart, you know you have exactly the definition God wants you to have.

Today, I want to talk about the word "disciple." I want to talk to you about what it means to be Christ's disciple because if you are saved, you are a disciple. There is a difference between being a disciple and being an apostle. All the apostles were disciples, but not all the disciples are apostles. There are requirements in the New Testament to be an apostle. Unfortunately, there are no apostles today because none of us can fulfill all those requirements. So there is a difference between disciples and apostles. You are a disciple, or you can be a disciple, but you cannot be an apostle. You need to know that.

There are some things about being a disciple that you need to understand. We need to define what it means. The Bible says in a number of places:

Luke 14:27

Whosoever doth not bear his cross cannot be my disciple.

Luke 14:33

So likewise, whosoever he be of you that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple.

John 8:31

Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed.

John 15:8

Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples.

These are all good and true verses. But unfortunately, we take from that by reading it, and we never really investigate what it means to be a disciple. Every one of those verses, as true as they are, as good as they are, and as righteous as they are, if you do not get the bottom-line definition, every one of those verses says by reading it at face value that you are a disciple by what you do. Ladies and gentlemen, that is simply not true.

Because you bear his cross does not make you his disciple. Because you forsake all does not make that something you do. A Jehovah's Witness continues in his word, but that does not make him a disciple. No, being a disciple has to do with an attitude. It has to do with, first of all, understanding what it means. I think this is where we have missed the boat when it comes to telling people about being his disciple.

If you are saved this morning and you are part of this church, you probably have committed in your heart that you want to be Christ's disciple. If you would ask the average Christian, "Would you consider yourself Christ's disciple, a follower of Christ?" And if they say yes, ask them, "What does that mean to be Christ's disciple?" You will never see a more blank stare on their face than a deer in the middle of the road stopped when your headlights hit it. They do not know why, because it is been something that they have been taught, something they have been told, but something that has never been defined for them.

They would give you an answer like, "Well, the Bible says, if you continue in my word, then you are my disciple." Or, "The Bible says, if you forsake all, I am your disciple." They would probably give you one of these verses if they are smart at all in the Word of God, or if not, they would just say, "Well, because I am saved, because I go to church, because my pastor said I was, because my mother said I was." But we have missed the boat. I want to talk to you about the fact that being a disciple and discipleship, at the lowest common denominator, is where you get it right down to the basic fundamental definition.

We are all saved here this morning. We do not ever have to worry about losing our salvation. We know that once you are born into God's family, there is no process that you can get unborn out of that family. The question here today is not, "Are you saved or lost?" or "Have you lost it?" or "Do you have it as a Christian?" The question is today, "Are you a good Christian in fellowship with God, or are you out of fellowship with God?" That is the real question for a child of God.

You cannot lose your salvation, but there are some things you can lose as a Christian.

- 1.) You can lose your fellowship, and you lose your fellowship by unconfessed sin.
- 2.) You can lose your rewards at the judgment seat of Christ.
- 3.) You can lose your joy as a child of God.
- 4.) You can lose the assurance of your salvation, even though you are still saved.
- 5.) You can lose your discipleship.

Did you ever notice Peter lost his discipleship? In Mark 16, after Christ is crucified and Peter goes through his denial, Jesus said, "Tell my disciples and Peter." Peter was saved. If he had died right then, he would have still gone to heaven. But he had lost his discipleship. He had lost the concept of being a disciple. If you want the rest of the story, turn to John 21:15-25, and you will see how he got it back. He got it back, but he lost it.

My point is this: you are not a disciple just because you are saved. Once you are saved, you have the potential to be a disciple, but a disciple is not something that you do. We talk about the word "discipleship." We talk about the word "disciple." In studying the concept of being Christ's disciple, I find a key word which comes in connection with the word of being a disciple. It is the bottom line and the attitude and what the definition is that you need to understand.

SEC: Discipleship is Discipline

The word "disciple" is akin to the word or a root word from "discipline." You are Christ's disciple not because you do anything. You are Christ's disciple because you are disciplined in the things that God wants you to be disciplined in. I remember a number of years ago, I was listening to two college students who were very high up on the academic scale, and they were doing their thesis for their doctorate. One of them said, "What is your major?" And he said, "Well, I am majoring in philosophy." And he said, "Oh," he says, "What discipline are you studying?"

I thought that was a strange thing, but then when I thought about it, I thought, "No, that is the right thing." Since that time, I have heard it many, many times. When you enter into a field in science, the real thing is the discipline of that science. What is your discipline? In other words, what that means is, what are you structuring yourself? What are you putting yourself in? What are you structuring yourself in that you are disciplining yourself to learn?

Salvation is free. You get that by just getting on your knees and asking Christ to come into your heart and save you. But discipleship, or being a disciple, only comes by discipline. Getting yourself to the place where you are disciplined in the teachings of Christ, can you become Christ's disciple? It is not something that you do. It is an attitude of your heart that says, "I am Christ's disciple because I am disciplined in what God wants me to do."

Doing things for Christ, we think today that that makes us Christ's disciple. Well, it makes you a Christian if you are saved. But what makes you his disciple is when you discipline yourself in his teaching. Salvation is free, but discipleship comes by obedience. It costs you something. Salvation does not cost you a thing. Being a disciple will cost you something. There is a discipline involved.

This is the fundamental reason why so many of God's people, when they get saved, never mature into strong Christians. This is where, as far as I am concerned, my own personal opinion, this is

where the churches have failed. This is why so many Baptist churches—and I have been associated with them all my life—this is why so many Baptist churches, the pastors say to me on a regular basis, "I cannot keep the people. We get them saved, but we cannot keep them. We get them saved, but we cannot keep them. They are here for a while, and then they are gone."

A lot of big churches are nothing more than the staff and the pastors and all the people just work doubly hard, three times as hard, coming up with all kinds of ideas to keep the attendance up because it is just a turnover of people. People get saved. I remember one time, this has been years ago, there was a great evangelist who was a young guy, and everybody, and he was coming to Baptist churches, and he was the talk of the town. The reason he was the talk of the town was because wherever he went, thousands of people would show up to hear him preach.

He would tell the church before he got there, "I will guarantee you that you will have a thousand people, 600 people, whatever, and we will have all kinds of results, and everything will just be great." That is how he went from one church to the other. I know the guy, and I know the guy was very shallow, and he is like most evangelists; you get five or six really good messages, and you can work the circuit. He was in Kansas City one time, and I had talked with him, and he was talking about the fact that he had just left Akron, Ohio, and he was there for a week.

In Akron, Ohio, they had a great revival at Akron Baptist Temple. That was a great church. Dallas Billington is one of the legends of modern church history. Dallas Billington, an old preacher from Kentucky, came up across the Ohio River, Harold Henninger and John Rollins, and some of the rest of them. He built a great work, but he had been long dead by then. His boy had taken it over now. This evangelist came in and sat down and talked, and he told me the fact that over the last week or so, they had 600 people saved.

He was using that because he was trying to book some meetings here, and the pastor's eyes lit up. It is like somebody with a gambling problem finding out that one slot machine is fixed, and all you have to do is put a quarter in it, and you are going to win. Your eyes just light right up, and they thought, "Wow, I can have 600 people saved." So I listened, talked to him. I thought to myself, "That is great, praise the Lord." But I had my suspicions.

So I called Akron Baptist Temple, and I said, "I hear you had a great revival last week with Brother so-and-so." And they said, "Oh, we really did." I said, "Is it true you had 600 people saved in the course of that?" This is like two weeks after. And they said, "Yeah, we did. We had 600 people saved." I said, "That is great." I said, "I just got one more question. I know you are busy. Let me ask you this: How many did you baptize Sunday?" "Did not baptize any. Had not baptized any of the 600."

Do you know what the problem is there? The problem there is a definition. As far as I am concerned, I would never go around and say I had 600 people saved if I did not stick around to see those 600 people really did what was right after they said they got saved. We are living in Kmart where the value systems have all changed. Being a disciple has nothing to do with being saved. After the day when you get saved, you become God's child, but you are not automatically a disciple. A disciple comes when in your heart you say, "I am going to discipline myself to be what God wants me to be."

SEC: Three Areas of Discipline

In our passage right here, I want to talk to you about three areas that you need to be disciplined. This is a great little story.

Luke 9:57-62

And it came to pass, that as they went in the way, a certain man said unto him, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest.

And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

And he said unto another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father.

Jesus said unto him, Let the dead bury their dead: but go thou and preach the kingdom of God.

And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Father, we thank you for the Lord Jesus. We pray you will bless our time today as we come into this Word and we look at it. Father, help these young men and young ladies, these moms and dads that want to be good, solid moms and dads for their kids, for these folks, Lord, that want to be the right husbands and the right wives. Help us, Father. Help the young ones to grasp these concepts. Help the old ones to renew in their own hearts where they are at and redefine as so many times. Help us, Lord, go back to Bethel to see those things that you have for us. We will thank you and praise you. In Jesus' name, for his sake, we ask it. Amen.

Here are three men who want to be Christ's disciple. They want to follow Him. I think in these three men, we see the problem we have of understanding what discipleship is.

- 1.) Discipline in Lifestyle (Comfort)

The first man in Luke 9:57-58 says, "And it came to pass, that as they went in the way, a certain man said unto them, Lord, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." The first thing that hits me from that after 30 some years in the ministry is the immaturity of that kind of statement. I have seen it in my own life. I have seen it in a lot of lives of others where somebody gets saved, and immediately they want to charge hell with a squirt gun, not even caring if they have any water in it or not. They are going to do whatever God wants them to do. They are going to stand for Christ, die for Christ. They have the vision of being Martin Luther nailing his 99 theses to the door. They get the idea that they are going to stand for God in this.

I am not saying they did not get saved. I believe in most cases they did. I believe their exuberance is good, but the bottom line is it is unrealistic. You already know that the moment you get saved—and we will see it even more when we get back to the book of Ezra—I showed you how Nehemiah was how you build a church. The book of Ezra is how you build your body

once you get saved. One of them builds a temple, the other one builds a city or the wall. Your body is the temple. We will talk about that in time.

This man comes down here and he says, "Lord, I will follow you whithersoever thou goest." That is simply not true. Christians do it all the time. Jesus' answer is classic because He strikes right to where the problem is. He says, "You want to follow me?"

Luke 9:58

And Jesus said unto him, Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay his head.

That is the reality of serving God. Sometimes when you first get saved, you are so caught up in the emotion. I remember when I was a young man, and I would hear great men preach the Word of God, and I would see them, and they would lay things out in the Bible. In my heart, I wanted to do that. I think every young man and probably young lady does that to some degree. I just thought, and I just, I just wanted to do that. All I saw was how wonderful it would be to be in the ministry. All I saw was getting up in front of people, laying out the Word of God, everybody screaming, yelling, throwing their hats, saying Amen, patting you on the back, and going to the next place, and everybody meeting you at the train station or the airport with big signs, "Hey, preacher is here, we are going to have a great time." That is not reality. It does not work that way. The reality is the devil waits for you at the train station. The reality is that it is just not realistic to think that you are just going to set the world on fire.

Jesus' answer is classic. He strikes right at the problem. The first thing that this young man has to deal with is the first discipline that you and I need to have, and that is lifestyle: getting too comfortable. It does not say it here, but I know what Jesus is answering. I am saying that this kid probably had a lot going for him, probably came from a nice house, probably had all kinds of things. Jesus knows that. That is usually the kind that think that the ministry is just like they live very comfortable because they have no point of reference. You take some kid, drug him off the street, who had to fight and work to survive. He has a different perspective of life, but this kid does not seem to come that way. He comes hip-hopping in saying, "I will follow you whithersoever thou goest." And Jesus says, "But I do not have any place to stay. I do not have any place to sleep. I do not have anything to eat."

The first thing that you and I have to discipline ourselves against is getting too comfortable in this life. If you are going to be a disciple, you need to understand this world is not your home. You are here for a purpose and a reason and a mission. God has something that He wants you to accomplish. It is your job, through the local church that God has put you in, and the men of God around you with the Word of God that teach you, and the Holy Spirit of God that lives inside you, and the Word of God that God has given you, to find out what that is.

If you are saved here this morning, you do not exist for the job that you do. Your job that you do exists that you might do what God wants you to do as His disciple. It is tough to get discipline in that. It is because lifestyle is such a thing. We are geared from the beginning to the end of our lives for things that you are not successful in. You have a lot. Every time you turn on a television,

every time you turn on a radio, you have somebody showing you what you do not have, what you ought to have. You cannot walk through a grocery store without seeing it. You cannot turn on the TV without seeing it. Women call it window shopping. I call it, "Let us go to the mall to see what we do not have."

We are geared all of our lives to have fitness. I am not against things. I have a car, I have a suit, I have a house, I enjoy a nice thing. But the bottom line is this: you have got to realize that you cannot get comfortable in it, and that is tough. I do not know how many of God's people start out just like this guy, "Lord, I want to do what is right. Lord, I want to serve you. Lord, I want to be everything I need to be to you." And then they go back to work, and they are all ready to go. They have their Bible, and then the boss comes along, gives them a promotion. They get this, they get that. Suddenly, it is a battle, and they see their friends around them. They are doing this, and the peer pressure of doing this, and everybody being part of this. You have to keep up with that standard.

I had a guy say one time, and this shows you the immaturity, "If I could just win the lottery, my problem would be over." That sounds good and it sounds true, but in reality, that is not true. If you won a million dollars right now today, I promise you, unless you are just a super disciplined guy or gal, I promise you that in a year's time, your lifestyle would now have been elevated to a million dollar lifestyle, and a million dollars would not be enough, just like your paycheck now is not enough. You buy more things, you get more things, you want more things, you see more things, you go more places, you get with people who have more money than you do. It is always the deal.

You need to understand that. There will never be, there is no pleasing your flesh. There will never be a time when you say, "This flesh will say, 'I have had enough.'" Never. There will never be a time when you say, "I have enough money." Why does a guy who has, I look at things like Bill Gates, why does one of these guys who has a hundred million dollars want more money? Right now, we all make basically nothing compared to them. You have a car, maybe two cars. We have cars, we have a house, we have this, we have that. We survive, and we get our paycheck in, and we look at each other and we say, "Well, this is my paycheck, this is your paycheck." We all live about the same, and we are all on a level.

But when you buy an \$800 car or a \$2,000 car or a \$3,000 car, you are in your little thing there. Now suddenly you get \$10 million. Now you buy a \$100,000 car, you buy a \$2 million boat. We bought our first home, it was like \$26,000 years ago. Their home is \$4.3 million. You see what I am saying? After a while, you start having to support that lifestyle. So \$100 million for him. I am sitting down here saying, "Oh man, I just wish I had half of what Bill Gates has got." Bill Gates is walking around saying, "Oh, I just wish I had half of what those Saudi Arabian guys have that have all that oil." That is the way it is. It just keeps going.

So someplace in the process, you know what you have to do? You have to become—it becomes the ugly word—satisfied. How do you do that? You have to discipline yourself. Paul said, "I have learned." I love that part because it does not come naturally. "I have learned whatever state I am in, therewith to be content." But you know how you get there? You do not get there by getting

saved and saying, "I am going to follow you, God, wherever you go." You get there by discipling yourself. You have to get there by discipling yourself to the point where you realize that God shall supply all of your need.

This kid, when he came to Christ, he said, "I want to be your disciple. I want to follow you wherever you go." But Luke 14:28 says a great principle:

Luke 14:28

For which of you, intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?

It costs you something. Salvation is free, but it will cost you something to be His disciple. It will cost you something to be His disciple. This first guy, the first thing that you and I have to understand about discipline, which is the key to being Christ's disciple, is that we have to be disciplined in the aspect of getting too comfortable in this world. You are here this morning to learn the Bible. Our times together one on one are to learn the Bible to what end? That you may fulfill whatever God has for you to do. Our Thursday night Bible studies, any question you want to ask about the Bible, why do we do it that way? Because I want to give everybody the fairest shot I can to learn anything you want to learn about the Bible. I do not want to come to you and say, "I decided this is what you need." I want you to say to me, "Bob, this is what I need. Give it to me."

Salvation is free, folks, but discipleship costs you something. It costs you discipline. The first thing you have to do is discipline your lifestyle. That does not mean you do not go to ball games. You do not have fun. You do not do this. You do not laugh. I am not talking about that. I am talking about you look at the world you live in and you understand what God has called you to do. Then within that framework, you make it work that God gets the glory out of it and not somebody else. Do not get your roots down too deep. When Abraham left down there, God said, "Forsake all. I have a great thing for you." The friend of God, probably the greatest man in the Old Testament, had a relationship with God, but he could not believe God could take Lot with him. What problem did that cause? He could not leave Lot because he was not disciplined. He was not disciplined.

- 2.) Discipline in Emotions

The second discipline, Luke 9:59: "And he said to another, Follow me. But he said, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father." Jesus said, "Sorry, no funerals." I understand the doctrinal part of this, but there is a prodigious side. Have you ever been to a funeral? Funerals are worth... everybody who hates everybody in life suddenly becomes friends at the funeral. You have uncles that will not talk, brothers and sisters that are fighting, have not talked for years, and Aunt Edna dies, and everybody shows up, and now they are nice until after the funeral, then they are all mad again. I never understood that.

Christ says, "No funerals." He says, "Let the dead bury their dead." What a thing to say! "Let the dead bury their dead." I know He did not mean that. I have told you before, whenever you come to the place in the Bible where Christ says something that is out of character for Him, He is

showing you a great truth. This is the Christ that wept when Lazarus died. This is the Christ that saw the widow bringing her son down there and walked over to the casket and said, "Young man, arise," and he got up.

Now, today, this guy says, "Well, I want to follow you, but my father is dead, and I need to go bury him." Jesus said, "Hey, let the dead bury the dead." What is He really saying? How can the dead bury the dead? He is saying, "Man, come on." I know He did not mean that. He is trying to get a point across. Christ's answer really shows that discipleship is an attitude. I promise you, if the kid would have said, "Okay, Lord, you are right. Forget him. Let us go," Christ would have said, "Okay, okay, you got the point. Now, go bury your father." That is so cold and hard, and that is what He is saying.

When the Bible says in Luke 14:26:

Luke 14:26

If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.

He is not meaning that you should hate your mother. On the other side, He says, "Honor your father and your mother." On the other side, He says, "Any man that hates anybody is a murderer." So, He is not contradicting Himself. He is trying to show you something because the second thing you need to discipline yourself in, and it always shows up with family, is your emotions.

We are frail in our emotions. Let me tell you something. You give me the biggest 500-pound linebacker in the world and break his emotions, and he is worthless. Do you know why? Because the Bible says in Proverbs 25:28:

Proverbs 25:28

He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls.

Your emotions are your key to everything. Let us face it. We are emotional people. We are emotional because God gave us emotions. Nothing wrong with your emotions. What is wrong? We have the wrong definition of what we are emotional about. That is what is wrong. We love inanimate objects today. I hear it all the time, and I know it is a phrase, and my kids hate when I say this, but it is so true. We love it. "I love that dress. I love that car. I love this house. I love this rock in my yard." Listen to me. "I love a house. I love a car. I love a boat. I love the rock in the backyard." Wrong definitions.

We spend so much time, and I know you say, "What is an expression?" Hey, do not give me that. "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks." We have got the wrong definitions. How do I know that? Because any time the body of Christ gets to the place where you start loving inanimate things, do you love your car? Do you love all Christians? No. Do you love your house? Yes. Do you love your mother or your dad who you are having problems with? No. "Oh, I love that dress." How many times have I heard that? "Oh, I just love that on you." What does that mean? I never figured it out. I love you. I do not love that on you. I love you. But I am not going

to go out and look at that truck and say, "I love you, truck." My truck never smiled and shook its head back. It did not even honk the horn. I have to hit the button to get the lights to flash. It is inanimate. It cannot love.

How much time do we waste talking about loving things we cannot love back? We have got the wrong definitions. I am not fighting you. Next time I hear you say, "Well, I love this house," or "I love this tree," I know now everybody is not going to talk to me anymore. They are going to be careful what they say. "Oh, yeah, this is..." No. "House? I do not care about that house. Preacher, I am going to go burn it down when we are done here today." "Brand new car. Watch this. I do not care about it." Let us not go to the extreme. I understand. Do you know what it takes to get out of that mindset? Because it is a mindset. Do you know what it takes? It comes to the word "discipline."

I do not have any time to love something that cannot love me back. It is not human. There are a lot of people that do not love me back, but I can still love them. But a car? I do not think so. Our emotions. I sat there. I watched the other night, and this is the confession now, I am going to confess to you. I watched a movie the other night. It was on television. It is an old movie, and I really like it. It was Brian's Song about Brian Piccolo. I sat down there, and everybody was... Barbara was going to bed. The dogs were... I do not even want the dogs to see me. I sat there and I bawled like a baby.

I watched the movie Alvin York. By the way, Wednesday was the anniversary of Alvin York when he did the Argonne 5. I know it is a movie, but when he sits down there, and his old grandmother who prayed for him... I know the story of Alvin York. It is more than a movie. It is a moving thing. He is just down there, and she is talking to him. He is a big old dumb boy who found God and loves God. I just bawled like a baby. After I am done, I kick myself. I am thinking about it. What is wrong with me? This is a movie. There are people dying without Christ who are lost who I should be on my knees for. What is wrong? I will tell you what is wrong: undisciplined.

We get so caught. It is so easy to do. I am not saying you cannot go to a movie and just sit there and say, or watch TV and just walk there and say, "Well, that does not bother me. I will kill it. I hope you die." No. It is okay to have emotion. But do not let it be all overriding in everything that you do. Understand that. Save your emotion for the One who loved you more than anything else in this world.

Just like this young guy, he said, "My father just died. I have got to go back and bury him." And He said, "Let the dead bury the dead," because He knows that especially in families or relationships, emotion can play a big factor. If you are not disciplined, you will go home today, get saved, go home today, be all excited about God and the Lord. Maybe your mom and dad will not. Maybe your boyfriend will not. Maybe your girlfriend will not. Maybe your friends will not. Suddenly, you have a problem.

Here is the goal. The goal for your life and my life is to get to the place in our relationship with God where there is nothing on this planet—that is what He is saying—no mother, no father, no wife, no husband, no brother, no sister, no nothing, no circumstance, no situation. Your job and

my job is to discipline ourselves to get to the point, not that I do not have emotions, not that I do not have feelings, not that I do not have compassion, not that I do not have all the things, but I have them disciplined that nothing or nobody in this world can get me off the track of what God wants me to do with my life. That is all. That, my friend, is Christ's disciple: a man or a woman who is disciplined.

- 3.) Discipline in the Past

The first man comes up and he says, "Hey, I will follow you whithersoever thou goest." That is lifestyle. You have got to discipline yourself. The second man comes up, and it is your emotions. We have to keep control. He says, "Compared to your love for me and your devotion to me, it ought to be hate for everything else in this world," even though He is not saying, "Hate your mother and your father."

Then the last thing He says, Luke 9:61-62:

Luke 9:61

And another also said, Lord, I will follow thee; but let me first go bid them farewell, which are at home at my house.

Luke 9:62

And Jesus said unto him, No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.

Three little things: no homes, no funerals, no goodbyes. The comfort of life, the emotions of life, and the past of life. You have to discipline yourself against the past. I do not know how many of God's people have just never gone forward because they could not stop looking back. Lot's wife could not get to where God wanted her to go because she just kept looking back, turned into a pillar of salt.

I was teaching in a Christian school one time, and I was telling them a story, but I had to give a little Bible thing. They were like in the sixth, seventh, eighth grade. I thought, that picks up on that, it is really nice and easy to understand. So I said, "I will do Lot's wife." So I said, "Lot's wife was called out of Sodom and Gomorrah. As she walked, she looked back, and she turned into a pillar of salt." A little kid in the second row raised his hand, cute kid. I said, "Yes." I thought he was going to say, "That really touched me," or "That was really good," or "That really..." Do you know what he said? He said, "That ain't nothing. My wife, my mom would go in the grocery store. She looked back and turned into a telephone pole." I said, "I like your story better than I like mine." I said, "Well, you come up and teach the class."

She could not get... that is a true story, by the way. She could not get her past. Lot was the same way. He got out. But he never did anything meaningful for God because the problem was not getting Lot out of Sodom. The problem was getting Sodom out of Lot. You have got to realize that when you get saved, behold, all things are passed away, all things become new. You are a new creature in Christ Jesus. That is what Jesus said. He says, "No man, having put his hand to the plough and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." It is not talking about losing your

salvation. Because if you keep looking back, you will never look forward, and you have to discipline yourself against your past.

Some of you more than others. We all go through things in life before or after we are saved. We all go through life that are rough. You cannot let those things defeat you. I do not care what it is. God does not care where you have been or what you have done or what you have been involved in, as long as right now you are where God wants you to be and doing what God wants you to be.

Philippians 3:13-14

Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended: but this one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before,

I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.

It is not easy. You have to forget it. One of the greatest concepts that will ever hit you as a Christian is the ability that God has not only to forgive, but to forget. That is unbelievable. I know all kinds of Christians. I know some Christians right now who are just fretting and just struggling with things that they have done in their past, and they do not understand the concept. I promise you, if the rapture came right now and they had to stand before Christ, they would be up there hem-hawing around, and they would start saying, "Well, Lord, years ago before I was saved, I just need to tell you this, I did this and I did that and I did that." The Lord would just kind of look at them and He would just watch them and listen to them, as He does. They would go on, "And right before I got saved, oh, I did this and I did that. It really bothered me all my life. Even after I got saved, I just really could not tell you because of what I did back here. I might as well tell you this too, Lord, I did this before I was saved." They will go on and on and on and on.

When they are done, they will look at the Lord and they will say, "Okay, I feel better." The Lord will look down and say, "Did you do that? You are telling me that you did all that?" And the guy will say, "Yeah, I am really sorry, Lord." The Lord will just say, "Hmm. I had forgotten that." Praise the Lord. I told you last week, God has a bottle for your tears, a book for your thoughts, and a bag for your transgressions. He puts them in a bag, dumps them in a deeper sea, and never thinks about them again.

You say, "Boy, I wish I could be like that." You ought to be. Do not give me this. A child of God ought to get so in tune with God that not only can you forgive, you can forget. Somebody does something bad to you. Can you forget it? Or do you just walk around every time you see a car that is like their car, or you see this or that, you see them at the grocery store or the mall, and the rest of your day is just reliving the whole thing, what they did to me and all this stuff? Do you know what it takes to get to that point where you can not only forgive but forget? Do not say, "Well, Bob, you and I just do not have the ability to forget." Yes, you do. In Christ Jesus, you do. You say, "Me? Nobody out of my mind?" No, it just will not make any big deal anymore.

When somebody comes up to you and says, "Well, how do you feel about what they did to you?" You just say, "You know what? Here is what I think." Somebody will say, "Well, boy, that so-and-so really talked bad about you. What do you think about that? What are you going to do

about that?" Here is my standard answer. Somebody said, "Well, you know, what they said about you. What are you going to, what do you think about that?" Now, here is what I think. Here is my opinion on it. This is deep, so you want to get this. You do not have to write it. Just listen to it until it sinks in, then write it down, and you want to buy the tape for this one thing alone. Here is what I answered them. I say, "You know what? If you want to get your limit of squirrels, you have got to get in the woods before the sun gets up. Because those critters will see you coming in the woods once the sun gets up, and you will not get your limit of squirrels." "What does that have to do with what they just said about you?" "Nothing. But that is what I think about it. Nothing. I do not care."

I am focused on the real things of life. Loving my shotgun, loving my car, loving my truck. It does not make any difference. You and I can come to the point where we discipline ourselves as Christ's disciple that you can have discipline in your lifestyle, discipline in your emotions, and discipline in your past. That you can forgive yourself. Not only can some of God's people not forgive others, they cannot forgive themselves.

SEC: The Key to Christian Life

Disciples. This is where we want to get because discipline is not only the key to the Christian life, discipline is the key in everything in life. Do you know why the Chiefs are 5 and 0? Because they are disciplined. They have it down where everybody knows what they are doing. They are disciplined. Discipline overcomes fear. They call it the red zone. They get down there. They have got to make a touchdown. I would be so nervous as the quarterback, I would not know what to do. They just get down like they just got the ball for the first time, and they are running in. They are disciplined.

Do you know how they got discipline? They did not get disciplined by going out and just passing passes all the time. Do you know how they did it? They get disciplined the same way they do everything in life. You just discipline yourself in the basics first. The fundamentals of football. What are the fundamentals? How to tackle, how to catch, how to whatever. I do not know anything about football. I do not know anything about baseball. I still wonder why all the umpires are named Al. I guess you have got to be named Al to be an umpire. I do not know anything about it. I just know this much about it: it comes down to the basics.

Everything at the speedway over there where I never get to go. Those guys run around there 200 plus miles an hour. Everybody says, "Oh, I could do that." Yeah, try it. There is more than just every 400 feet turn the wheel. More to it. Do you know how you learn to be a good driver? Like you would be anything else: basics, basics, basics. I forget who it was. A long time ago, they were asking this guy how he did a great baseball team, and his answer was classic. Everybody thought it was stupid. But when I heard it, or I read it, I did not hear it because I was too young. But when I read it later, I knew exactly. They asked him, "Well, what about you? How are you going to win the World Series? How are you going to do this? How are you going to do that?" It was a baseball game. He just suddenly got up and he took a baseball and he said, "Gentlemen, this is a baseball." And he sat down. Everybody said, "Well, that was just..." No, that was a great answer. Do you know what he said? "How are we going to win it? The basics. This is a baseball."

How are we going to make you a disciple of Christ? Simple. This is a Bible. The basics. Basics number one: what does it mean to be His disciple? The greatest aspect in your life and the fundamental thing that has to be there is self-discipline. You have to discipline yourself in your comforts of life, discipline yourself in your emotions. I am not saying you cannot have nice things, should not have nice things, should not want nice things. Do not want them more than what Christ wants you to do. And discipline in your past. That is where it has to start. We will take that and we will build upon that every week, showing you piece by piece by starting, defining it.

Next week, as far as I know, unless God changes it, I am going to go through the basics of the second most important thing you need to have, and that is a balance in your life. I am going to show you and define what a balance is. How do you balance? Object lesson for the week: when your wife is not around, go to the refrigerator, get three apples, and see what you can do. You will be a disaster. Balance is just that hard. I watched a guy one time, he was behind his back around. Do you know how he got to that point? He got to that point through practice of the basics. Balance is the same way.

If we do not do it next week, if God shows me something else, but that is where I think we are headed. Because I have a number of things that I want to define that you have to have in concrete. Then we begin to build upon that, and I am going to show you what the next layer is, and then we are going to build layer by layer by layer by layer that when you are done, you are going to have everything at your fingertips to have the relationship that God wants you to have. Today, now you understand what it means to be His disciple. It means to be disciplined. It is not something you do, it is something you are. You do what you do because you are what you are. If you do not have the discipline, you are just an undisciplined Christian doing a lot of Christian things. If you do have the discipline, then you are a disciplined Christian doing the biblical things, and that is where it is at.