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Let's start with prayer. Amazing, glorious Heavenly Father. Thank you so much for everything you have done for us. Thank you for your grace that we don't deserve. Thank you for your mercy that gets us through. God as we read from your word today as we try to understand the call you've placed upon our lives, please illuminate in our hearts Speak to us through your Holy Spirit help us to understand what you are saying in the name of your son Jesus. Amen Today's today's message is on discipleship and And it's It's something that over Over the week as I've been preparing for it every I would you know I'd work on it one day and I come back to it the next day and I would think to myself I am just unfit to give this message. I what am I doing? I cannot give a message of discipleship I I feel like I don't have it, right and I Just kind of feel like God's saying to me that's okay Matthew you got to appreciate to yourself to your first in line So if any of you are offended by anything I say just understand that I'm offended first I Wanted to preach on discipleship because I see in this in our world. I see too many roller coaster Christians These these are people who have a spiritual high. Maybe it's a really good church service or maybe it's summer camp or You know some some event where they feel real close to God they feel amazing and Then they go back to their normal life and then in their normal life they They what they don't walk with God. They don't have God in their heart and in their mind and so they end up getting worn out and exasperated And then they get back to trying to seek that high that spiritual high again and Someone I think it was Aaron Hughes pointed out at summer camp He said he said the reason this happens. He's talking to the kids He says the reason this happens is that you you've been at camp all this week and every day you've been reading your Bible You've been having devotions. You've been having small groups You've been having worship every single day the reason that you feel so close to God right now is because you've been living your life the way God intended and and the reason that you leave here and it feels like you just drop off is because You're no longer spending every day in Devotions and worship and and doing the things you should be doing to live a healthy spiritual life You see your faith your your life with Christ cannot be a hobby it must be an obsession an Obsession is the thing that Infects all the other points of your life You know like if you're obsessed with the Colts you talk about the Colts at work you go to the souvenir Shop at the mall you you know everything you do is touched by whatever you're obsessed by and Jesus Christ is supposed to be our obsession He's supposed to be the thing in the back of our minds even when we're out doing the other stuff the mundane the daily stuff God's calling to us is not on again off again Christians not roller coaster Christians not Sunday morning Christians He wants us to have a day by day moment by moment obsession with him and The term that he uses for this is discipleship He wants us to be disciples of Jesus Oswald Chambers calls discipleship a personal passionate devotion to a person our Lord Jesus Christ We can see this calling when we read in John 12 starting in verse 24 Most assuredly I say to you unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies it remains alone But if it dies it produces much grain He who loves his life will lose it He who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life If anyone serves me let him follow me and where I am there my servant will be also and if anyone serves me him my father will honor and Again in Luke 14 starting in verse 26 If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother wife and children brothers and sisters yes, and his own life also he cannot be my disciple and Whoever does not bear his cross and come after me cannot be my disciple For which of you intending to build a tower does not sit down and first count the cost whether he has enough to finish it Lest after he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish it all who see it begin to mock him saying this man began to build and was not able to finish or What came going to make war against another king does not sit down first to consider whether he is able To with 10,000 to meet him who comes against him with 20,000 or else while the other is still a great way off He sends a delegation and ask conditions of peace So likewise whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be my disciple We are not called to just be saved We are called to be disciples God's intention for us was not just to get our slates Wipe clean so that we can get back to living the life we were living before He he wanted us to be transformed. He wanted us to be new creations. He wanted us to have new life He did not want us just to be forgiven so we could get back to our old lives He says your old life was wrong living for self was wrong come have a new life Come live with me and for me. That's the call that he gives us We lost our right to live the good life in the Garden of Eden we had it made back then We had perfect life one easy rule donate that fruit and Just enjoy life live life. That was it And we messed it up, and we gave up our right to live the good life Now we're called to be disciples, but the discipleship is not a bad life. Don't let me don't be misled there You can choose right now to live for yourself or to live for God and some of you might be thinking well I'm living for myself, but I'm doing just fine, but beware of that James 2 14 says what does it profit my brethren if someone says he has faith, but does not have works Can faith save him? Luke 12 45 If that servant says in his heart my Lord delays in his coming and begins to beat the men servants and the maid servants And to eat and drink and to be drunken Then the Lord of that servant will come in a day when he isn't expecting him in an hour that he doesn't know and will cut Him into and place his portion with the unfaithful That servant who knew his Lord's will and didn't prepare nor do what he wanted will be beaten with many stripes Matthew 7 21 not everyone who says to me Lord Lord will enter the kingdom of heaven But he who does the will of my father who is in heaven Many will tell me in that day Lord didn't we? Prophesy in your name and cast out demons and do mighty works And then I will tell them I never knew you Depart from me you who work iniquity You see if you say you have faith But your life hasn't changed then whatever you have it's not strong enough to save you a Faith that's strong enough to save is a faith that changes your life Now to be clear this change needs to take place first in your heart if You've modified your behavior To look like a Christian, but your heart still doesn't belong to him then you're still in trouble as James 4 4 says Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God It was like in the story of lot when he was being rescued from Sodom and Gomorrah And they were being taken out of town and they and the angels who were rescuing lot and his family said don't look back But lots wife her heart still belonged to that to that world that life of sin and she looked back over her shoulder And she was turned into a pillar of salt God doesn't want just your behavior. He wants your heart. Hosea 6 6 for I this is the Lord speaking for I desire mercy and not sacrifice and The knowledge of God more than burnt offerings He wants our heart not just the work of our hands He's calling each and every one of us to discipleship He wants us to give up our vain pursuits in this life chasing after the treasures and pleasures that don't last and Instead set our hearts on him and his kingdom Colossians 3 to set your minds on things above not on things of the earth Matthew 6 20 lay up for yourself treasure in heaven where neither moth nor rust destroys where thieves do not break in and steal You have a life worth living and worth living for but it's not down here. It's it's in heaven. It's the kingdom of God God is calling us to new life changed life not just the same old person with Christian frosting on the top But someone who's down to the down to the core a new creation Second Corinthians 5 17 therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation old things have passed away behold all things have become new in Galatians 6 15 for in Christ neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything but a new creation That's He's using circumcision as a metaphor for the Jews who kept the law Strictly and the Gentiles who who did not and he's saying it's not the behavior Whatever they're doing outwardly Isn't as important as if you're a new creation on the inside once you're a new creation on the inside the behavior will follow But it needs to start on the inside So what is standing in the way of this If if the Holy Spirit is in you right now, then I hope he's he's testifying that that what I'm saying is true But there's probably also another voice in there who's squirming and making you uncomfortable and maybe giving you some excuses and that voice is pride Pride is what I used to think I was so messed up and I had all of these really Great sins I could point to in my life and say look how messed up I am and then when I finally thought I got those All fixed and that I was all better God said now let's deal with pride and he finally let me see that and I said, oh my goodness All this time Pride is so sneaky because when you say pride people people think Job well done. That's pride and and that's not that's not the biblical pride biblical pride is So much worse so much sneakier Pride is when you for whatever reason play the part of God the judge in your own life when You make the judgments instead of God's judgments. That's pride When you judge what is right and what is not right? You're playing a part of God when you judge what is good and not good When you judge this is what I will do. This is what I won't do When you say this is what it's permissible for me not to do or permissible for me to do You're playing the role of God the judge Then when even when you define who you are rather than live by God's definition of who you are You're taking the role of judging that is pride for example If you hear this call to discipleship and you think oh, that's too much work Then what you're saying is I judge that laziness is acceptable and I excuse myself from the work Only God can excuse you and he doesn't Or if you say I'm too broken for discipleship, I'm too messed up Then you're playing God by saying I know better than God what I'm capable of No, you don't he knows best he knows what's best and he still calls you First Corinthians 9 starting in verse 24 Don't you know that those who run in a race all run? But one receives the prize Run like that that you may win Every man who strives in the games exercises self-control in all things Now they do it to receive a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible I Therefore run like that as not uncertainty I fight like that as not beating the air But I beat my body and bring it into submission lest by any means after I have preached to others. I myself should be rejected Philippians 3 13 brethren I do not count myself to have apprehended but one thing I do Forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus Hebrews 12 1 therefore we also since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses Let us lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily ensnares us and let us run with endurance the race That is set before us First Peter 1 13 gird up the loins of your mind be sober rest your hope fully upon the grace that is to be brought to You at the revelation of Jesus Christ in Luke 9 25 What does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits his own self his own soul? All this language of racing and beating my body and laying off the weights and girding up my loins This is not a call To just go back and live your comfortable life the way you were before you were saved This is not a call to Sunday morning Christianity. It's not a call to a hobby It's a call to live and die for the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords And I think it's amazing how new Christians just get this instinctively You know they As soon as they're saved they're filled with this joy and this excitement and they're eager to study the Bible and share What they've heard with others and they're eager to worship and the reason that they get so excited is because they have no pride They they know that they are new and young and just a little child in the faith and they have no Facade that they need to put on they don't need to impress anyone They realize that the they're brand new that and so they have no pride and they're like hey. Yeah, let's do it. I'm excited I've been saved from my sin I don't need to pretend like I've been holy my whole life and they just dive into it and they jump into it because they have no pride and They'll they'll pay any price They'll give up their time and their money in their reputation to share this good news to experience this life with Jesus And so what is the cure to pride humility of course When we look to God and say God you are my God you are my Lord Your word is the law of my life and have mercy on me a sinner That is when God will lift you up that was when he'll lift us up When we stop trying to pretend that we've got it all figured out When when we let go of the important important things in our life and Just accept that he is our king and our Lord and just say Thy will be done That is when he will lift us up. There are so many verses about Humility in the Bible, and I've just got a smattering of them here from Psalms For you will save the humble people but bring down hottie looks The humble he guides injustice and the humble he teaches his way The humble shall see this and be glad and you who see God your hearts shall live The Lord lifts up the humble he casts down the wicked to the ground He takes the Lord takes pleasure in his people. He will beautify the humble with salvation and In Proverbs surely he scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble When pride comes then comes shame, but with the humble is wisdom By humility and the fear of the Lord our riches and honor in life Humility is in a New Testament as well in James 4 10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and he will lift you up First Peter 5 5 6 therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time Casting all your cares upon him for he cares for you That's really that's really the key here you can and you should humble yourself Because that's when God will lift you up and take care of you We we see we are so afraid to humble ourselves because it means letting go it means giving up control But when you humble and you say God fine I give up I'm gonna do it your way He takes control. He lifts you up. He blesses you he covers you with his protection We see this in In the early church we look you know sometimes at our own lives And we don't see all of the the the power and the miracles and the answered prayers that we see in the early church But That's because we need that the humility of the early church We just need to be willing to say God. I need you. I give it all up for you I'll do whatever you say we just need to spend copious amounts of time in prayer Because when you pray you are acknowledging That that God is the source your source of your refuge and your strength The less you pray the more you're saying he's not really my strength. I'm my own strength. He's not my source. I'm my own source Prayer is the mark of someone who is truly humble because they acknowledge that they need him The trick to humility is you must choose it You must choose humility your flesh your sin nature is the source of pride and So you are never going to feel like being humble you cannot wait around till I feel humble This is not gonna happen That doesn't come from inside you Humility is a choice In fact when you first choose humility your flesh is going to rage against it and fight you and say no No, no, but you must go anyway Choosing humility means giving up control and Choosing humility means giving up comfort Comfort is such a deadly enemy Whole nations have allowed themselves to become conquered just so that they could be comfortable so they wouldn't have to fight a war Comfort is the castle that surrounds our flesh the flesh that we've been told to crucify And so we must storm that castle We'll storm those gates if we ever hope to crucify our flesh our flesh must die and It has locked itself away inside comfort I'm not calling you to be a masochist don't misunderstand But when Jesus is Lord, he will ask you to move outside your comfort zone And you just need to humbly say yes, Lord. I will obey I trust you I know that even though this is uncomfortable for me that you are right there with me You're giving me everything I need to get through this difficult situation You see most of us have had had kids and we see this amazing example of this pride humility comfort zone in our kids if We let our children always have their way. They would kill themselves literally Right, they would eat, you know junk food or jump off the roof or never bathe and get sick or something but kids have no idea how to take care of themselves and Compared to God we are just foolish children, too and It's hard to admit that It's hard to admit that that God is so much wiser than we are as we are above our own children But it's time that we just said alright God enough of doing it my way you are Lord and I'm your foolish child so I will just submit to you into doing it your way and Just like when your kids finally figured it out that you know what you're talking about Then then then suddenly everything goes well for them the same will be for you when you finally submit to God and say alright God your way suddenly everything is going to click into place because God is going to take control and he's going to Cover all of those weak spots that you've been working so hard to cover up yourself If you think you can't do this then look at all the people who God has used You got Matthew Who he was? wealthy But he was also a tax collector, so he was hated by everyone He probably had a lot of obligations in his business that he felt like he couldn't leave He also probably felt like he was so despised that no one would listen to anything he said But God still used him And he had Paul Paul was a persecutor of Jesus and his church Paul had had made so many bad choices. He actually made himself an enemy of God but God still used him and Timothy was was young and inexperienced and and felt like everyone was older than him and he he just couldn't you know tell grown-ups what to do and God still used him and There was Peter a guy who was just a very common plain individual. He he was just a fisherman He was constantly putting his foot in his mouth But God still used him to God used people like you God used people worse off than you he uses people worse off than you there are people who were more poor than you dumber than you have more debt than you he uses them and The difference between us and those people Maybe I don't know each and every one of your cases, but the difference The people that God uses are just the people who are willing to be used. That's the only difference All of our excuses that we say God I can't do this for you because it's all just smoke and mirrors The real thing is that we're not willing and God can use us if you'll just say alright, I'm willing I'm a mess. I'm Too this or I'm too that or I've done this too many times But I'm willing and I trust that you've used people like me before and I trust that you're gonna use me The Call in your life and mine is to be a disciple one who is obsessed with God Maybe that means something drastic like becoming a missionary Or maybe it just means volunteering on our food pantry on Mondays and Wednesdays Or teaching in a Sunday school class or holding a small group in your home What whatever way that God leads you just be obedient to follow him If you've truly humbled your heart you'll find yourself relying more on your times of prayer and worship and Bible study You're gonna need it again. That's gonna be the source of strength for you It's you're like an athlete and that's your training And you can't You can't say I'm not trained and use that as an excuse to get out of anything because God's giving you the Bible and he's There 24/7 to listen to your prayers And you're gonna need that to get to get this done It might sound scary it might sound like hard work But you got to remember that God is an artist looking to perfect his masterpiece in you So don't be afraid of that be excited about what you will become And like that song Potter's hand we just give up and say alright God Whatever you want to do wherever you want to lead me Whatever that whoever that person is you want me to go speak to Or write that letter to or go up to and say I forgive you Or show that kindness and that mercy to or or give my money to or give my time to God just leave me show me where I can serve show me where I can shine your light in this world Show me how I can be your ambassador in this world God and I will stop worrying about myself. I will stop worrying about my money. I will stop worrying about my reputation I'm just I'm just gonna gonna follow you God wherever you send me. I'm going to be obedient It's gonna be awesome. We're gonna end up looking like the early church which excites me Your motivation should not be to a philosophy It should not be to a higher standard of personal enlightenment Your motivation should be love for the man Jesus He's the one that you're going to follow and That one that's the scary one because those first two when it's just a philosophy fear whatever you're still kind of in control But when you've committed to following Jesus you've given up the control to him But don't worry because he loves you and he will take care of you A lot of us have Been reminded in the past two weeks that Life comes to an end And It's healthy for us to take those times of mourning To think about the end of life and the end of our life And what and what it's gonna look like when we look back on all we've done on all we've said and accomplished I Was so blessed at at my Grandmother's funeral all the people who showed up You know the last few years of her life she lives out in Park County, there's a lot of Amish there and We had hired Amish to come in and be caregivers and there were so many Amish at her funeral You know Caregivers don't come to funerals But but these women came to my grandmother's funeral because of who she was in the life she led And her witness and her testimony and there were people who said oh She gave so faithfully to the food pantry. I'm coming to her funeral because of Because of how faithful she was in in that area of her of her personal ministry And there was just all these people who who had this testimony so these just little things she did all throughout her life common Ordinary things that all just came together into one beautiful testimony of her life and And it's healthy for us to think about our own life and the testimony that we are living and the legacy we are living And when we stand before God and and he shows us all the opportunities that he's given us Let's be proud of what we did with those opportunities. Let's be proud that we made the most of those opportunities We're gonna have a time of open worship now and I Hope you will just ask God to search your heart for anything that you're holding on to that It's just it's still on the throne of your heart It's still the things that are taking the place in your life where he belongs And just just lay those down say God I give that up I let go of it and from this point on I will be a disciple One who follows you wherever you go one who obeys your will in every situation One who trusts you to take care of me so that I can stop worrying about myself and start worrying about your kingdom Let's think about that right now (Silence) Friends I know that True discipleship is scary and costly But at the end of our lives it will be the only thing that ever really mattered And so I hope you go from here today just Reevaluating your priorities Asking God To lead you just just to say I I will follow you wherever you go Let's have a word of prayer Dear God, thank you That you have not called us to be slaves that you are not cruel towards us But that you are a God who loves us That you you do have good in store for us And that Though it will cost us In the end it will we will result in a crown of glory Please help us to understand this call to discipleship God Help us to find the areas in our hearts that are still full of pride and help us To be humble to choose humility And you just obediently follow wherever you would lead us in the name of your son Jesus. Amen