*This document is an AI transcription of an audio recording and may contain errors; refer to the audio recording for accuracy.*

Heavenly Father, thank you that you have chosen to give us new life, new identities, new natures, and that you've made us new creations in Jesus Christ. God, as you call us to be disciples, as you call us to walk with you, to follow you, Jesus, help us to understand what that means. Please plant that truth down deep in our hearts and help us to live it out every day of our lives, giving you all the glory. In the name of your Son, amen. So last week I spoke on discipleship, true discipleship, and that message started in my head because several weeks ago, but before my vacation I was thinking about what does it look like when you really get serious about your Christian faith. What does that look like? And so I started a list, and the list was called "What Does the Perfect Christian Look Like?" And you hear a phrase like that, and you kind of chuckle at it because there's a lot of debate about what is perfection and all that kind of stuff. But I was just trying to ask myself, "What does it look like if I'm doing everything the way I'm supposed to be doing it?" And so I wrote down this, and I just started coming up with all these ideas, and I made this big list of, "It looks like this, it looks like this." And then when I was done with that, I looked back at that list and I tried to summarize it, and the summarization was discipleship. That's what it means to be a disciple. And so last week I gave my message on being a disciple, and we talked about the call to discipleship and why it's important and that sort of thing. We talked about it from kind of an academic point of view. But then I thought this week it would be very healthy to go back to this list now and look at some examples. Now that we have kind of the idea of discipleship on our heads, let's walk through some examples, let's discuss them, and just take a practical look at what being a disciple looks like. So number one, first example of what does a true disciple look like? A true disciple prays about everything without ceasing. Now, when you read that verse, "Pray without ceasing," you're kind of, "Oh, well, obviously the Bible doesn't expect me just a nonstop stream of prayer coming out of my mouth. I would never be able to communicate with other people." And obviously that's not what it's talking about. But when you've taken this call to discipleship, which is to follow Jesus, to live your life mimicking Him, following Him wherever He leads you, and we talked last week about how the key to that is to kill your pride with humility. And so when you've humbled yourself, when you realize that you need God, that He is your strength, that you can't do it on your own, then prayer becomes as natural as eating. You realize it's something that you are truly dependent on. And so when it says, "Pray about everything without ceasing," what it's talking about is you've realized you need God, you need prayer, you need help. And you've stopped believing that you've got it all figured out. You've stopped believing that you can figure it all on your own, do it all on your own. And when stuff comes your way, you pray about it. You rely on God for help. And that's a humble attitude. So praying about everything is just carrying on a dialogue with God and realizing that you need Him in every situation. My next example of a true disciple, what they look like is a true disciple preaches by example Jesus' style, getting their hands dirty and not just holding a sign on the corner. Now, I'm not saying there's not a place for people with signs on the corner, but at some point, if you want to get into people's lives and you want to share this good news with them, it's going to come through the avenue of love. When Jesus went out to preach His news, it came with miracles, it came with feeding. He took care of people. He showed love. He showed compassion. And our preaching, when we share the good news that we have, it must be accompanied with love. And that love will get us into the situations. It'll get our hands dirty. And we will preach by example, not just with words. And so that's what a true disciple would do, is that rather than just tell people what they're doing wrong, rather than just point out their problems and say, "Here's what you need to do," and then leave them alone, they will volunteer their time and their effort and their energy to walk with the person through what they're going through. Number three, what does a true disciple look like? All of their interests and hobbies and everything become ways to point at God. All the little bits of their life that they used to do for themselves, now they turn those around as opportunities to point to God. It doesn't mean you can't fall asleep reading a book at night or little things to pass the time, but you no longer have an obsession other than Jesus. This is now your obsession. We talked about that last week. Anything else that tries to be your obsession is really just stealing your love and your attention from God. And so that needs to be either just dealt away with or it needs to be redeemed in order to bring this world closer to God, to bring you closer to God. If something brings you closer to God, then praise God. But if it's drawing your heart away from Him, if it's drawing your affection away from Him or your time, your energy, then you need to separate yourself from it. We talked about how if your hobby is cooking, then you can cook food for the homeless or for the food pantry or that sort of thing. If your hobby is camping, you can join the Boys and Girls Club, take inner city kids out, take them camping, think ways that you can show love and serve the world and just share the love of God through those things that you used to do just to please yourself and satisfy yourself. The point of a true disciple is that God is now their obsession. And so they go through all of the things they do in their life and they look for ways to redeem them, look for ways to point to God through all of the little bits of their life. A true disciple is quick to give God the glory and is not ashamed of it. That's something that I still struggle with, actually. I mean, when I'm focused and intentional and I'm in a situation, then I can bring myself to bring God up in a conversation or to say, praise God, when I truly believe that God has done something good. And, you know, because I probably told you the story before, but we talked in the youth group about how any opportunity where someone says thank you and you're about to say you're welcome, you could instead say Jesus loves you because any good thing that we do shouldn't be about getting thanks and about getting gratitude for ourselves. It should be about pointing to God. I did this good thing for you, not so that you would like me, but so that you would look towards God. And so any time someone would say thank you instead of saying you're welcome, saying, yeah, that belongs to me, instead say Jesus loves you. And that's why I did that. And so the youth group took it upon themselves now that they rushed to the door to fight to see who opens the door. And then as everyone walks out and says thank you, they go, Jesus loves you, Jesus loves you. And and when it's an intentional situation like that or when you're around friends, it's really easy to do. But I've I know with me personally, when I'm out in public, which is really bizarre because it's a complete stranger and it's someone I'm never going to see again. Sometimes it feels just a little awkward to say, Jesus loves you. And that's why I'm doing this. But a true disciple is not ashamed to give glory to God and he is quick to do so. It's not just our hobbies and our interests that we use to point towards God. It's even just our charitable acts. The good things we do, if you think that you're a good person, that your Christianity has brought you to some level of, you know, personal betterment or whatever, make sure you give God glory for that. Don't walk around soaking in people's praise like that's all belongs to you because because God has turned you if you're anything good at all, God has done it to you. So make sure that if people think, oh, he's a good guy or he or she does real well at their acts of service or whatever, make sure that you are pointing to God because he is the one who enabled you to be that kind of person and he's the one that you're doing it for. So so be quick to give God the glory. And I had verses that go along with all of these. They're printed out in your bulletin and I've been I've been skipping them, but I'll keep pressing on. A true disciple is quick to turn to scripture for wisdom. Second Timothy says all scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness. Quick to turn to scripture. And it's just coincidence that that was the first scripture I read. As we get as we talked about before, if you want to be a true disciple, if you want that we talked last week, you have to choose humility. You have to choose humility. You have to say the Bible says that I am a sinner and I'm wicked and fallen and that I need Jesus. And so Jesus, thank you for saving me. Thank you for redeeming me. I choose to believe that. And so I choose to humble myself and realize, God, I needed you. I needed you and you came and saved me. Thank you. Humility is that choice where you speak the truth to yourself. Now, we learn the truth from scripture and if we want to grow as Christians, if we want to become better disciples, then we realize that God created those scriptures, that God spoke through men throughout history and wrote these verses. Then we realize that God created those scriptures, that God spoke through men throughout history and wrote these beautiful words to us that are now contained in our Bible. And so we trust and believe that God, who is all powerful, is capable of speaking through men exactly the words he wants us to see, that these words are from him. And we trust that he knows what's best for us even if we don't understand it sometimes. Because a lot of times it doesn't make sense to us. God says, do this because God says, believe this. And we say, what, you know, that God, if I do that or even if I say I believe that, I'm going to be social outcast. I'm going to be people are going to distance themselves from me. And God says, just trust me. All right. And so we when we have difficulties come, when we have trouble, we believe that God has provided everything he needs for us in his word. And that his word is, you know, we're a friend's church and we're very strongly in agreement that that God puts his Holy Spirit in us and directs and guides us by his Holy Spirit. But the trick is, and this is a place where a lot of Quaker churches have gotten messed up, is that God is the same yesterday, today and forever. And the Holy Spirit that speaks to your heart today will not contradict the Holy Spirit that was in people's hearts when they wrote the scripture. In fact, that was a quote from George Fox, the same spirit is in me who was in that was in them that authored the scriptures. And so as we try and discern what what feelings in me are from God and what are just my flesh speaking, God has given us the Bible to help us align that spiritual compass inside of us. So that's why scripture is churches who who rely completely on just what is inside and who abandon the Bible, they lose track of which voice they're listening to and they get off course. God has given us scripture to help us stay aligned with him. So a true disciple is quick to turn to scripture. A true disciple also does not wait for his feelings to line up before he does the right thing. Again, we talked about how your feelings come from your flesh and your flesh is infected with sin. And there's going to be a lot of times, if not most times, when you know the right thing to do and you're not going to feel like doing it. And. A mature Christian, a true disciple, observes the situation, realizes that his feelings are probably in conflict with the right thing and maturely chooses to do the right thing. He accepts that you can't just wait till you feel like doing the right thing. If you wait till feel like doing the right thing, you're probably doing it for self-serving reasons and not for God. There's a lot of people outside of the church who, you know, they're philanthropists or something and they do good, but they give all that money because it gives them a tax break. Or they do all that good work because it's community service or something, you know, or just, you know, to improve their public image. There's a lot of people who do good, but not for very good reasons, very selfish reasons. The thing that should mark us as different, our good works as different from those is that our good works are sacrifice. They cost us. But they give glory to God and they further his kingdom. So that is the difference between our good and their good. And you're never going to feel like doing the right thing. Sometimes you will. But most of the time you're flesh is going to be like, oh, I'm uncomfortable. I'm too tired for that. I'm it'll come up with all kinds of great excuses. But maturely, we say, no, I'm going to I know the right thing to do and I'm going to do it because I love you, God. And I'm your disciple. Galatians 5 24. Those who are Christ have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. That's the verse that goes with that one. Next, a true disciple is quick to forgive, quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger. Quick to forgive and listen. Slow to speak and anger. The verse that goes with that one is James one nineteen. So then my beloved brother and let every man be swift to hear slow to speak and slow to wrath. Very straightforward. This I've noticed I've pretty much given up on TV and 24 hour news networks because everyone is the exact opposite of this quick to anger, quick to speak, slow to listen and slow to forgive. And it's I found personally that that stuff when there's four different faces all talking over each other and arguing on TV, I find that that kind of brings out that same feeling in me. And so I just don't watch it anymore because that's that's not healthy to my spirit. And that's not that's not every news show, but you know what I'm talking about. We as we are true disciples, we are humble. We choose humility and and as humble people, we realize that even if we don't see it, the fault might be ours. We may be the ones who are wrong. That's what humility tells us. And so in a situation where we think we're right and we think we deserve respect and all that kind of stuff, we as humble disciples, we are quick to listen to what that person is saying. Slow to speak, slow to get our response out, slow to get angry. And I found that that whole slow to speak thing that also applies to my head because all the times in a situation, someone will start talking. And as soon as I think I have the gist of what they're saying, I start formulating my response. I may not be talking yet, but that's not being slow to speak. We really need to stop and listen what they're saying. And we read and when we get this right, it might look really weird because we live in a society where it's expected that as soon as you're done speaking, I start boom. And that there should be no quiet time in between there. And if we get this right, if we really are quick to listen and slow to speak, it may, our conversation may start looking like you speak and then I pause and then I respond. And that'll probably set some people just on edge. It feels weird even when just thinking about it. But if we're really doing it God's way, then it's probably going to look something like that. And the world isn't going to understand it, but that's OK because we're not supposed to be of the world. Quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to anger and quick to forgive. A true disciple admits they have sinned, but obeys Jesus when he says go and sin no more. Go and sin no more is from John 8 11 where they were going to stone the woman. And Jesus said, you're right. The law says stone her. Whichever one of you has never sinned, go ahead and get us started through the first stone. And everyone suddenly realizes that they're all sinners just like this woman. And so they all walk away. And Jesus says, does no one condemn you? And she says no. And he says, then neither do I. Go and sin no more. I don't I believe Jesus is good and loving, and I don't think he would have said that if it couldn't be done. And that's a very controversial issue. And I know that I told you last week about when God first revealed my pride to me. And I had spent so many years doing these prideful things and didn't even realize that I was being prideful. And and so I'm sure that there is a layer of of sin that I'm doing that is I'm unconscious of. And and I I am seeking God and I'm trying very hard not to do that. But when it comes to the conscious stuff, when it comes to the stuff that you do over and over again, you keep falling into that same hole. I think that's the stuff that Jesus is talking about when he says go and sin no more. I think he's saying. There's another verse that says that when you sin God when you are tempted, God gives you a way out of that temptation. And I believe that that that really is that's what a loving God would do. He won't let you get tempted past what you can bear. He will give you a way of escape, but it also requires willpower. And that's your part of the equation. God gives you the way out, but you have to bring the willpower to the table. And so I think when Jesus says go and sin no more, he's saying turn your willpower towards righteousness. Choose to walk holy. Choose to live a holy life. Go and sin no more. A true disciple. Well, yeah, it's humble. I think I've dealt with that one several times, but. In that humility in that spirit of humility, a true disciple asks for help, asks for prayer and asks for forgiveness from his brothers and sisters in Christ. It's easy for me to be humble before God and a lot harder for me to be humble before you guys. Because. Well, God already knows everything I've done. So. For me to say, God, this is what I'm struggling with, he just says I know. But for me to come one of you guys, I'm struggling with this. Well, that's. A lot more difficult. Because we're humans and our relationships aren't as perfect as my relationship with God. And for me to come and say, I need help. I need prayer. I need forgiveness. It takes humility. But if you're truly a disciple, if you're truly living. In the footsteps of Jesus, if you're truly trying to mirror him. Then. Then you're going to strive to have perfect relationships with these brothers and sisters here. You want perfect love amongst. Like it says in Acts, they were all in one accord. You can't be in one accord if you sweep stuff under the rug. You have to confess and you have to ask forgiveness. Ask for prayer. So true disciples strives for that. They strive for honesty and love in their relationships with their fellow men. I've got two more points. A true disciple. Does not deafen and blind himself to the plight of the hurting and lost. But finds ways to help. If you're following Jesus. Jesus did not hang out with the religious people. Jesus hung out with the sinners. He went to the people who were sick. He went to the people who were sinners. He went to the hurting, the lost. It says how his heart was overflowing with compassion for those people. If you're following Jesus, he's going to lead you there. And I don't mean that magically one day you're going to feel like I need to go to the inner city or something like that because as we discussed, feelings are always going to betray you because feelings come from your flesh. But if you want to be a disciple of Jesus, you have to seek out opportunities to love and serve the hurting, the lost, the sinful. It's going to mean hanging out with people who don't speak our Christian terminology. It's going to mean hanging out with people who listen to some really off-color music or who do substance abuse and who don't handle their relationships well and who don't handle all kinds of things well. It's messed up people. God's calling us to get involved in messy lives. And a true disciple realizes that what we have is the solution to their messy lives. I'm not saying that you can look at a messy problem and immediately know all the answers, but you should fill your heart with compassion and find ways to help and share good news, share the truth of God. Finally, a true disciple actively pursues greater knowledge and understanding of the Bible in order to more effectively communicate and live by the truth. If the scripture that you get up here on Sunday and the worship, if that's all of the spiritual nourishment you get throughout the week, then you may not know it, but you are starving spiritually. You may have adapted to that level of hunger, but the truth is that you are not getting what you need. I try very hard to give you a good message to make sure you leave here well-fed spiritually and on the second Sunday well-fed physically, but you can't just eat one day a week, and that applies to food and that applies spiritually. So as a disciple of Jesus, if you really want to follow Him and grow in maturity, you're going to have to seek out scripture and learning and times in the Spirit throughout the week. It's going to mean studying your Bible. You may have to go down to the bookstore and find a good devotional, something that really speaks to you. Come join the Sunday school class. They're studying with Francis Chan right now. He's got all kinds of great books. There's a lot of really intelligent, Spirit-filled people out there who have a lot of good things to share, and you either need to be learning from them or just getting into your Bible and learning from your Bible, but it is your bread. It is where you are nourished. And if you are serious about being a disciple, you have to be serious about being healthy spiritually. Make sure you are fed spiritually. You will go into this world. If you go out into the world and we talk about sharing your faith and living this kind of lifestyle, if you just think, "Well, that sounds nice, but I'm just so unequipped," if you're unequipped, that's the key to being equipped. And don't feel like you have to put it into a certain framework. Just go to the Christian bookstore. Start flipping through until you find something that speaks to you. But there's a lot of good truth out there. There's a lot that people have gleaned and that they are sharing. And that is their place in the body of Christ to teach us and to feed us and to build us up. So learn from them or just go to the Bible and learn from God, but make sure that you are being fed. So those are my 10 or 11 examples of what it looked like when you have accepted the challenge to God's call to be a disciple. When you have said, "I'm going to make Jesus my obsession," when you say, "I am going to make sure He is at the front of my mind throughout my life and I'm going to do my best to mirror Him," when you have accepted that call to discipleship, this is just some of what it will look like in your life. And so as we have our time of open worship, I just want you to just think about some of those examples. Think about what might need to change in your life. Think about what your life looks like now and what it would look like if you were really perfect Christian, a true disciple. Let's take a moment. Heavenly Father, thank You that You have come to give us new life and that this new life is a beautiful, wonderful, amazing thing because it is exactly what You have created us for. Thank You, God, that our purpose and our destiny is wrapped up in discipleship and what You are calling us to. And God, please help us to overcome our fears of what this means and help us to find the joy and the purpose and the destiny in this life You have called us to. Help us to examine our lives and to find the ways, find the areas where we need to bring Christ front and center. Please help us to call you to the front of our minds as we go throughout this week. And we also want to say, God, thank You for this meal that is waiting for us. Thank You for the hands that have prepared it. We pray that You bless it to our bodies and that as we gather to do our monthly meeting that You will give us wisdom and peace and to be led by Your Spirit. In the name of Your Son, Jesus, amen.