

# Discipleship Dilemma

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- [ 0 : 00 ]    Take your copy of the scriptures and turn with me to Mark chapter 8.  
He will also be ministering to us again in the 5 o'clock service. Mark chapter 8. Hear God's word as I begin reading at verse 27.  
Jesus and his disciples went on to the villages around Caesarea Philippi. On the way, he asked them, Who do people say that I am?  
They replied, Some say John the Baptist. Others say Elijah. And still others, one of the prophets. But what about you, he asked.  
Who do you say I am? Peter answered, You are the Christ. Jesus warned them not to tell anyone about him.
- [ 1 : 30 ]    He then began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests, and the teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and after three days rise again.  
He spoke plainly about this. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. But when Jesus turned and looked at his disciples, he rebuked Peter.  
Out of my sight, Satan, he said. You do not have in mind the things of God, but the things of men. Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said, If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.  
For whoever wants to save his life will lose it. But whoever loses his life for me and for the gospel will save it.  
What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, yet forfeit his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?
- [ 2 : 53 ]    If anyone is ashamed of me and my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, the Son of Man will be ashamed of him when he comes in his Father's glory with his holy angels.  
It is a great privilege to be with you this morning, particularly to be able to open up God's word with you. And I would invite you to have your Bibles open at Mark chapter 8.  
Mark chapter 8. Let's pray. Lord God and Father, we thank you for your life-giving word.  
We pray that you would work in our lives now. Lord, that you would challenge us where we need to be challenged. You would change us where we need to be changed. And that above all, your Son would be lifted up and glorified this morning.  
In Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I want to start with a question. I want us to level with one another. Is the Christian life worth it?
- [ 4 : 07 ]    Is it worth it? Do you think maybe we take all of this just a little bit too seriously? Maybe we could relax the rules, the commands, the restrictions of the Bible just a little bit.  
Be more flexible with the interpretation of the laws and commands that we find there. Live more like everybody else. Blend in. Let's be more accepting.

Can't we be Christians but just keep out of trouble? Even if we have to keep what we believe to ourselves maybe.

Can you see the temptation to do that? Why make this life harder than it needs to be? And that's a dilemma I want to explore with you this morning.

Because many people and many churches compromise right here. And our passage that we just had read to us puts such a dilemma. What I'm calling a discipleship dilemma.

[ 5 : 14 ] Such a temptation into clear focus for us. And I want to show you from our verses what is at stake.

What we'll find is instruction, justification, warning, motivation, encouragement, hope, fuel for the fire.

As we live as disciples of Jesus in a fallen and a pressurizing world. And here we're breaking into one small but very significant section of the ministry of Jesus in Mark chapter 8.

Verse 34 through 38. And in the verses preceding that passage. We observe Jesus had performed a wondrous miracle. What a high the disciples must be on.

We don't know exactly how it happened. But right in front of their very eyes. They had just witnessed a great multitude of 4,000 people fed with just a few fish and a few loaves of bread.

[ 6 : 21 ] In fact you can see in verse 19 that it's something that he'd done before. He also healed the sick. Like the blind man in verse 22. He manipulates the natural elements.

He creates, he restores on the spot. That shouldn't surprise us because Jesus is God. Jesus is creator. But imagine the reaction of the people at the time.

Just imagine how popular he was and we can see that a great crowd was following him. But even amongst his disciples there's still some confusion about who exactly he is.

As Jesus during that private time away asks that famous and critical question. Who do men say that I am? Who do you say that I am?

And in verse 29 Peter says you are the Christ. The anointed one. The Messiah. The one who was promised. The prophet, priest, king. And that's Peter's confession.

[ 7 : 29 ] And that brings us to an encouraging climax. In our section verses 34 through 38. On the subject of following Christ.

Following Christ. It's a beautiful paragraph. And it includes exhortations. And our dilemma. Starkly laid out before us.

Is the Christian life worth it? This is the turning point of the gospel of Mark. They know now. That Jesus is the one they've been waiting for.

He is the long awaited Messiah. But now the emphasis. Now the thrust changes. As Jesus begins to reveal to them. In detail. What it means to be his follower.

His disciple. He reveals his true mission. And it's a little bit hard to swallow. A little bit hard to accept.

[ 8 : 28 ] What kind of Messiah is he? Is he what they expected? And verse 31 is critical here. It says. And he began to teach them that the Son of Man. Speaking of himself.

Must suffer many things. And be rejected by the elders. And the chief priests. And the scribes. And be killed. And after three days. Rise again.

And it's there. You see. That Jesus starts to clarify. The shocking reality. Of his mission. And the destiny. Of his followers.

You see. There is a divine necessity. That Jesus must suffer. In order. To save. At the very heart of this mission.

Is sacrifice. He's the suffering servant. And Peter. In his ignorance. Even selfishness. About his own well-being maybe. He rebukes Jesus.

[ 9 : 26 ] Who in turn rebukes him. This isn't how it's supposed to be. Jesus. Get with the plan. This is where. This is where it gets good. And we're on your team. We're along for the ride.

Why would you talk about. Suffering. And death. And rejection. This is a problem. Because by following Jesus. Their future would be tied.

To his. If you go down. We're going down with you. They understood what he said. But it seems they're confused. Or slow to believe.

Slow to accept. This is key. Listen now. You see this demonstrates. That a wrong view. Of messiahship.

Leads to a wrong view. Of discipleship. A wrong view of messiahship. Leads to a wrong. View of discipleship. It's the same for you. If you.

[ 10 : 23 ] Have a wrong view. Of Jesus. If you have a wrong. Understanding. Of the Bible. It will lead to wrong. Expectations.

A wrong view. Of how to live. The Christian life. And also. A wrong understanding. About why we live. The Christian life. And it's in this context.

That we. We shift to verse 34. Another scene. They're in Caesarea Philippi. 25 miles. North of the Sea of Galilee. This is heathen territory now.

And what follows. Is teaching from Jesus. With short. Pungent sayings. About. Personal commitment. Personal commitment.

Of his followers. And he shows the people. That are listening there. That. The Christian life. At the heart. Is a life.

[ 11 : 18 ] Of sacrifice. That our true. Christian life. Is. Is anything. But casual. But rather. It's a fully. Committed faith.

Reformer. Martin Luther. Famously put it. A religion. That gives nothing. Costs nothing. And suffers nothing. Is worth nothing. Nothing. Now as usual.

We assume. That there's a mix of believers. And unbelievers. Listening as Jesus speaks. And if Jesus is. Is looking to be popular.

What follows. Is the strangest. Recruitment drive. In history. So let's break down. These discipleship. 101 verses. Into two natural parts.

One flows out of. Or one. Explains the. The other. The other. And our first. Point. Is found in verse 34. And it gives us the. The overall teaching.

[ 12 : 15 ] Of Christ. And what it means. To be his willing. Disciple. All with the help. Of the Holy Spirit. We are. We are saved. Entirely. By grace.

We can't. Earn our salvation. But nevertheless. This. This. This. Is the call. On the believer. To demonstrate. Obedience. Demonstrating.

True. Saving faith. And that will be our first point. The demands. Of your Christian. Life. And then secondly. We'll see from verses 35. Through 38.

Four justifications. For that. Why we need to live that way. Ultimately. For Christians. These justifications. Are great blessings. But whilst we're focusing.

On the blessings. We can't ignore that. Negative. Flip side of the coin. For the unbeliever. If that's you this morning. And that will be our second point.

[ 13 : 10 ] The blessings. Of your Christian. Life. So please look with me. At verse 34. Where we find the demands. Of your Christian life.

Says this. And calling the crowd. Says summoning. To him with his disciples. He said to them. If anyone would. Or will. Or desires.

To come after me. Let him deny. Or renounce. Or disregard himself. And take up his cross. And follow me. See in verse 34.

We start a new section. A new portion. Of the gospel of Mark. And it's that transition. From that previous. Private retreat. That scene. With his disciples.

Out in the countryside. And Mark introduces this. With a summoning together. Calling. The crowd. To him. With his disciples. And the original language here.

[ 14 : 07 ] Is pointing strongly. To. To alert us. To something new. Something emphatic. He's about to tell us something. And it's important. He's going to reveal something.

Some new instruction. Some new instruction. And it's a call. To costly. Discipleship. A call. To costly. Discipleship.

If you want to come. After Christ. This. Is what. Is required. This. Is reality. In the.

Early days. Of. World War II. After Winston Churchill. Took over. From Neville Chamberlain. After the negotiations. Failed. And war was declared. He became leader.

Of Great Britain. And in one of his addresses. He said. All I can offer you. Are three things. Blood. Sweat. And tears. He was honest.

[ 15 : 04 ] That was. Reality. Listen. The future goal. Was clear. And in the same way. We find. Three parts.

Of discipleship. Three parts. Of the Christian life. And it's difficult. But it's reality. How does Jesus.

Being the Messiah. And living in the light. Of this truth. Translate. Into your everyday life. We're told. By Jesus. Here. That.

Being his true disciple. Involves three challenges. Three commitments. Three D's. Denial. Death. And direction. Denial. Death. And direction.

This is what he says. Let him. It's actually a command. Or an imperative. So I think the NIV says. Must. That's right. He must deny himself. And take up his cross.

[ 16 : 00 ] And follow me. Let's examine each of those. And what we should be thinking. As we look at those. Is. Am I a disciple of Jesus? Have I. Have I.

Got a true understanding. Of the realities. Of the Christian life. Is my brain. Calibrated correctly. To have the right expectations. So here's the first demand.

The first D. A demanding. Denial. A demanding. Denial. Deny yourself. Deny yourself. We need to be clear. What this means. Two years ago.

I had my. Medical. On my 40th birthday. And the doctor told me. That I've got to deny myself. Salty foods. And foods with high cholesterol.

It's not the picture here. That's not the kind of denial. We're talking about. It's not giving something up. For. For a diet. It's much more radical. Than that. It's denying yourself.

[ 16 : 56 ] Of your own. Personal interests. Or self. Promoting ambitions. All earthly. All personal. Security.

One writer says. It requires the denying. Or saying no. To the self. As the determiner. Of one's goals. Aspirations. And desires. Your goals.

Your aspirations. Your desires. Are not top of the tree anymore. We can look at the disciples here. In chapter 10. Verse 28. Says we've left all. We've given everything.

Is what he's saying. What we find there. In the tense. Of the verbs. Is that it's a continual. Action. Not a one time event. Like the old bishop of Liverpool.

- J.C. Ryle says. These words. Ought to ring. In our ears. Like a trumpet. Every morning. When we rise. From our beds. And every night. When we lie down. May they be deeply.
- [ 17 : 54 ] Graven into our memories. And never effaced. By the devil. And the world. Does your Christianity. Does living the Christian life.
- Cost you anything? You see. Jesus is not part time. He's not extracurricular. He demands the central.
- Place. In your life. We need to turn. We must turn. From our selfish ways. And put God. Before. Everything.
- We need Christ awareness. Rather than self-awareness. It's a revolution. In our thinking. In our attitudes. In our motives. When we become a Christian.
- We're a new creature. And embracing this denial. Is the rock solid bedrock. Of discipleship. It impacts the very core.
- [ 18 : 50 ] Of our lives. 1 Corinthians 6. 19. We are no longer our own. Christ is your first priority. It's goodbye to your old self. It's surrendering.
- Laying yourself down. It's giving yourself wholly to Christ. Sharing. In his shame. And death. Linked to him. Tied to him. In that discipleship.
- Jesus becomes the object. Of your life. Not me. Not you. Not somebody else. We live for something. Bigger than ourselves. It's a life of mortification.
- We kill the remaining sin. He is Lord. Over our lives. Despite. The earthly loss. Or cost. Our main objective. Is God's glory.
- Alone. That's the demanding. Denial. And then our verse. Shows us a demanding death. A demanding death. Take up your cross. Take up his cross.
- [ 19 : 50 ] The message isn't. That life will be a struggle. People often say. This is a cross. I have to bear. That's not it. It's not a burden. No. This is a picture.
- Of shame. Of being. Despised. After what. He's just explained to them. He's saying. Join me. As I head.
- Towards execution. It's a horrifying. Cruel. Ugly. Shameful. Way of torture. Reserved for the worst. Of the worst.
- And we know. From chapter 15. Condemned. Prisoners. Had to carry their cross. Or a part of it. At least. And it builds on. It intensifies. What it means.
- To deny yourself. If you won't. Bear the cross. You'll never have the crown. Placed on your head. Can you see. How becoming. A disciple.
- [ 20 : 42 ] Of Christ. Is more than making. Minor tweaks. In your life. There's danger. There's persecution. There's difficulty. There's heartache. There's grief.
- One commentator. Says. That to take up the cross. Means to identify. With Christ. In his rejection. Shame. Suffering. And death. And Luke.
- In his gospel. Chapter 9. Verse 23. Says that this. Readiness for death. With Christ. And surrendering. Control of your own destiny. Is a wholehearted.
- Daily responsibility. We are to imitate him. In this commitment. Jesus here. Knows where he's going. He's going to the cross. When he says this.
- Today. When we think of a cross. We naturally think of Jesus. But not back then. It hadn't happened yet. Imagine what the disciples. Thought about. What he said. After his death.
- [ 21 : 43 ] Must have been burned. Into their minds. So we have a demanding. Denial. A demanding death. And the third demand. There is a demanding. Direction.

A demanding. Direction. Follow Jesus. Wherever he takes you. Wherever he goes. Whatever he teaches.

Whatever he demands. From you. Whatever the consequences. It's a picture of. Of attaching yourself to him. Taking the same road.

Accompanying and fellowshiping. With him along. The way. Effectively says. Whoever will come after me. Must follow me. It's kind of a. What we call a tautology. Emphasis.

Through repetition. They're on the same path. Same fate. Following. His way. Not. My way. Not your way. The message here is to command us.

[ 22 : 39 ] To follow him. Habitually. Continually. The original language says. Follow. And keep. Following. He sets the standard.

He is. He is our magnetic north. He takes first place. We need to. Passionately pursue. Christ likeness. Following his teaching.

Defining all we say. All we think. All we do. Being. Being willing to. Leave all. And give up all. So that we can. Follow him. And identify. With him.

Being ready to suffer. For. And with him. That's a demand. Of the Christian. Life. That's a challenge. When this world.

Looks at us. Do they see. That we are following. Christ. Is there evidence. That we are following. That we are dying. That we are denying. These three are evidences.

[ 23 : 36 ] That you are truly saved. But also. That you are growing. It's not just about. Praying a prayer one time.

You don't just enter. Through the narrow gate. You then walk. On the narrow way. It's the foundation. Of all that follows. You see.

Verse 34. Is a conditional statement. Followed by four. Explanatory clauses. In our remaining verses. We see the negative. We've seen the demands.

Of the Christian life. On this side. Of a set. Of enormous. Cosmic scales. And this is where. Jesus begins. To pile on the. Positives. On the other side.

Of the scales. Two sides. Bearing the cross. Self-denial. Suffering for. And with Christ. Over here. And then we get.

[ 24 : 30 ] The reason. For these. Gospel. Commends. The implications. Of this. Call. To discipleship. This is the dilemma. This is hard. Over here.

Is it worth it. All that effort. Why would you and I. Even consider. Signing up. For something like this. Yes. So we've seen.

The three. Expectations. Or demands. Of the Christian life. Or discipleship. But think through. The other side. Is the Christian life. Worth it. He moves on.

And builds on. This foundation. And he shows us. The blessings. Of the Christian life. The blessings. Of the Christian life. Verses. 35. Through 38. This is where I want to leave us.

This morning. Because the beginning. Of the answer. Is that there is a bigger picture here. When we understand. Biblical truth. When we calibrate.

[ 25 : 29 ] Our brains. To a biblical. Mindset. We'll take these verses. One at a time. And what we're going to see. Are those four statements.

Four justifications. Even. Motivations. For denying yourself. Taking up your cross. And following fully. What we find.

Is amazing. Jaw dropping. Immeasurable. Blessing. Firstly. We don't get what we deserve. We deserve. To lose our lives. Our souls.

He should be ashamed of us. As verse 38. Says. But look at what we get. Instead. Through pure grace. And mercy. This is the basis.

For the urgent. Command of verse 34. And this is our first. Of four. Sub points. We find in verse 35. An undeserved life. An undeserved life.

[ 26 : 24 ] Verse 35. For whoever would save his life. Or soul. Will lose it. But whoever loses his life. For my sake. Or on account of me.

And the gospels. Will save. Or preserve. Or keep it. Do you trust God. In every area. Of your life.

Paul in Galatians. Chapter 2. Says. It's as if he no longer lives. He's now living. For Christ. But he says. But Christ. Lives in me.

My life is owned. My life is owned. By Christ. And it's the paradox. That we see. If you save your life. You lose it. If you lose your life. You'll save it. We must be willing.

To lose our life. For the gospel. For our faith. And our faithfulness. In following Christ. It's speaking of so much more. Than just physical life.

[ 27 : 21 ] Here. This is. This is talking about. Your undying soul. Your eternal. Existence. That's what you need.

To be concerned about. Real life. Beyond what we have here. Not clinging to this. But rather confident. Of future.

Rewards. Not fleeting pleasures. Don't you. If you've ever heard of. C.T. Stud. He was an international. Superstar.

In England. In multiple. Sports. Which is unusual. But he. Turned away from it all. At his peak. To spread the gospel.

And this was his famous reason. If Jesus Christ. Is God. And died for me. Then no sacrifice. Can be too great. For me. To make for him. People thought he was crazy.

[ 28 : 18 ] He wasn't. He had his priorities right. This word gospel. Or good news. It has an outward sense. Your faith.

Is not a private religion. The persecution. We read of here. Is as a direct result. Of the believers. And disciples. Actively going out.

In mission. To tell the gospel. If we lose our lives. For Christ's sake. Then we will be saved. That's the undeserved life. For the Christian.

In verse 35. Now look at verse 36. Where we find an undeserved prophet. An undeserved prophet. P-R-O-F-I-T. There is a place.

Called. Aix-la-Chapelle. Near Aachen. Right on the western border. With Germany. Near France. And that's where. Emperor Charlemagne.

[ 29 : 13 ] Is buried. Charles the Great. Hugely. Powerful man. Who died. Near the start. Of the ninth century. Around 200 years.

After his death. After he had entered eternity. Some people decided. To open up the burial chamber. The vault. And what they found. Was a dome. And below it.

Was a space. A death chamber. Under the floor. And a marble chair. A coronation throne. Where his body was sitting.

In royal robes. Sitting on that throne. With a copy of Mark's gospel. Open on his knee. With his finger. Resting on this very vault. Verse. Verse 36.

For what does it profit. Or benefit. A man. To gain the whole world. And forfeit. Or lose. His soul. He was a mighty leader.

- [ 30 : 10 ] He. Protected. And spread. Christianity. By the sword. The truth is. We don't know. If he was truly. A Christian. Or not. But what a powerful.
- Question. Jesus asks. Which leads. All but the one. Following blind. Unreason. Or willful. Self deceit. To an inevitable.
- Conclusion. The answer. We know it. Is that even if you gain. Everything. There is no profit. Zero profit. If you lose.
- Your soul. It's a picture of. The totality. Of the wealth. Of the world. All the pleasure. All the acclaim. All the achievements. The height.
- Of human ambition. This isn't some profit. And loss. That balances out. This is a picture. Or a contrast. Of utter spiritual.
- [ 31 : 06 ] Bankruptcy. Or Christ. Many biblical examples. Mark chapter 10. Verse 22. We have the rich young ruler.
- Who in a sense. Had the world. We have Nebuchadnezzar. Seeking honor and fame. In Daniel chapter 4. Or in Ecclesiastes 9.
- Where it talks about. All the amusements. And follies of the world. There's no profit there. One writer. Asks the question. What is it.
- To lose the soul. He says. It is one. To lose Christ. And all spiritual. Enjoyments. Two. To lose heaven. And all its joys.
- Forever. Three. To lose all rest. And peace. To all eternity. Four. To lose all hope. Of ever. Bettering.
- [ 31 : 59 ] Our condition. Five. To lose the very world. Itself. Now that was presented. Negatively. Positively. The Christian. Has Christ.
- Has all. Spiritual enjoyment. Has the eternal. Hope of heaven. Has all its joys. Forever. So we've seen.
- An undeserved life. We've seen. An undeserved prophet. And now in verse 37. An undeserved value. An undeserved value. It's another question.
- For what can a man give in return. Or exchange. For his soul. It's a picture of a ransom price. It's a rhetorical question. You know the answer.
- Nothing. Nothing. There is no price. High enough. To pay for your soul. It's valuable. Beyond all. Human. Comprehension.
- [ 33 : 00 ] All our hopes. Attitudes. Expectations. Giving everything. Over to him. That's where the hope is. That's where the value is. What would you give.
- In exchange. For your soul. You see. The question is. Between finding pleasure. In this world. Apart from God. Or finding God. In this world.
- And all our pleasure. In him. Jesus illustrates it further. Doesn't he. In Matthew chapter 13. Verse 44. And onwards. The kingdom of heaven.
- Is like a treasure. Hidden in a field. Which a man found. And covered up. Then in his joy. He goes and sells. All. All. That he has.
- And buys that field. Again. The kingdom of heaven. Is like a merchant. In search of fine pearls. Who on finding one pearl. Of great value. Went and sold. All.
- [ 33 : 56 ] That he had. And bought it. What truly lasts. Into eternity. You can have all your wealth. Buried with you. Like the Egyptians. Does no good.
- You can't even take. A single coin. To pay the ferryman. In Greek mythology. There's a story. Of a boat. Traveling down.



The Mississippi River. Full of passengers. Many of whom. Were gold miners. On the way back. From California. In the mid-19th century. Just after the gold rush.

And all of a sudden. There's a bang. Somewhere. Under the boat. And it becomes. Immediately apparent. The boat starts. Going to one side. It's going down. Remarkably.

They were able to get off. All those people. Those who could swim. Could swim to the shore. There was a few lifeboats. Those who couldn't swim. Could propel themselves. Holding on to something. Everybody.

[ 34 : 54 ] Got safely. To the shore. 15 minutes later. A man appears on deck. He'd been downstairs. Into all the bunks.

Of the gold miners. And filled his pockets. And his backpack. And wrapped. Around his waist. All the gold. That he could get. At that very. Moment. He was the richest man.

For miles. Around. He had all he needed. For this life. Financially speaking. More than people earn.

In a lifetime. Tied around his waist. He'd made it. And then he jumped. Into the water. Never to be seen again. Could that man not.

Connect the dots. In his brain. Could he be. So foolish. My friend. If you've not. Repented of your sins.

[ 35 : 54 ] You're more foolish. Than that man. Get rid of the gold. This is the point. Get everything. Out of the way. Let nothing.

Stop you. Nothing. Until you rest. In the only. Saviour's arms. Some come to a realization. That they've had the balance.

Wrong. All their lives. It might be apocryphal. But the last words. Of Elizabeth the first. Were. All of my possessions. For a moment. More of time.

Shakespeare. Famously portrays. That in his. Play. Richard the third. Picture. Desperate in battle. A horse. A horse. My kingdom. For a horse.

There is. No monetary value. Surely. You realize. That. Nothing. Can compensate. Christian. Though. Look at your value. To God here.

[ 36 : 52 ] Look at what he did. To redeem you. We need this. True life. True profit. True value. All undeserved. But finally. Look at verse 38.

Where we find. An undeserved. Honor. An undeserved. Honor. For whoever. Is ashamed of me. And my words. In this adulterous. And sinful.

Generation. Of him. Will the son of man. Also be ashamed. When he comes. In the glory. Of his father. With the holy. Angels. It's a further rationale.

For all that we've looked at already. It's setting the scene. For the heavenly courtroom. Ahead. A judgment. That leads to shame. Or glory. And the true Christian.

Won't be ashamed. To stand boldly. With Christ. And confess him. Before men. Publicly. Regardless. Of mockery. Of ridicule.

[ 37 : 47 ] Of cost. Because suffering here. Leads to glory. And as a result. Christ won't be ashamed of you. When he comes. And the contrast. Our dilemma is laid out.

Staring us in the face again. What if this is you? It's a solemn warning. That if you are ashamed. To confess Christ. Confess his teaching.

Publicly. Or if you are rejecting him. In favor. Of the world. You will give an account. On that day. This is evidence.

That you are not truly saved. Are you more concerned. About the smiles. And frowns of men. Than the smiles. And frowns of God. This world is ripe.

For judgment. It stands in rebellion. Against God. Don't stand with it. Remember. These are four blessings. To the believers. But. Shocking warnings.

[ 38 : 45 ] To unbelievers. In the context. Of that urgent appeal. That each of us. Young and old. Would deny ourselves. Take up our cross. And follow him. These.

Are costs. To following Christ. And they are high costs. But they pale. Into insignificance. When we compare them.

With the blessings. And promises of God. You know. That I cannot promise you. An easy life. Until Christ. Comes again. We still have the effects. Of the fall.

Sin. And pain. And death. And grief. And it's real. And it's hard. But the words. Of Christ. In our passage. This morning. Help us to lift.

Our eyes to him. Because that's. Where the only hope. Is. That's where hope. Can be found. And nowhere else. Beyond this short life.

[ 39 : 42 ] To eternity. Do you see. The discipleship dilemma. There's a cost here. A real cost. In following Christ. But no fair reasoning.

Can get beyond. The obvious conclusion. That there is an infinitely. Higher cost. In not following Christ. This is not like. The Pepsi challenge.

Where you choose. Which you like best. This is not. Hedging your bets. This is not. Judging on the balance. Of probabilities. No. This is about.

Seeing your true state. As a sinner. Before a holy God. You don't. Deserve. Any kind of savior. But he came.

For sinners. Like you and I. There's no other. No other person. We can follow. I implore you. To surrender yourself. To Christ.

[ 40 : 37 ] This is a matter. Of your life. And your death. Don't make. A fatal mistake. Avoid the tragedy. Of a. Wasted life. And eternity.

Without Christ. Are you willing. To pay the price. What are you willing. To do. To get it. Don't rest. Until this is. Resolved.

Believer. These are solemn. And weighty. Words. Of Christ. Oh that cross is heavy. But we're promised.

Grace. From Jesus Christ. To carry it. We know. That countless. Have gone before us. And can testify. That this life. Is gone. In the blink of an eye. If you are a true disciple.

You understand that. Believer. Your foundation. Is the truth. Of the gospel. In Christ. Found here. This is our. Only comfort. In life and death.

[ 41 : 32 ] As the Heidelberg. Catechism. Puts it. We belong. To him. He is faithful. He has. Fully paid. The price. Of our sin. On the cross.

He set us free. We're preserved. We're assured. Of salvation. And therefore. We live for him. When we grasp. This eternal. Landscape. Then when.

Troubles. Come your way. And they will. Come your way. You are standing. Firmly. Here. On truth. On Christ. On rock. That cannot be moved.

We're not surprised. Because we know the big picture. We know that God remains. On the throne. In full. Control. If you are a Christian.

The truths we see. Overflowing from these verses. Are a motivation. To perseverance. Keep going. Live passionately. Live radically.

[ 42 : 28 ] Serve this savior. Regardless of the cost. Also a cause of assurance. So I ask you. Have you got solid. Rock theology.

To stand on. So that when troubles. And hard times. Come. You won't wobble. We do not do these things.

On our own power. We have to embrace. This suffering savior. And follow him. In his steps. He sets the example. He has faced this. As he denied himself.

Took up the cross. And died. As a substitute. In the place of sinners. Paying the price. And taking the rightful penalty. On himself. So that we can be saved.

So that we can be welcomed. Into heaven. I asked some questions. At the start. And I want to answer them. As we finish. Is the Christian life worth it?

[ 43 : 25 ] Should we compromise? Should we tweak. Some of the more difficult things. In the Bible. To make our lives. A bit easier. There is.

Nothing. More important. Than living. For Christ. In full. Complete. Submission. To him. And his teaching. We should stand out.

From the world. Not stand back. But I can't. Offer you. An easy life. But I can. Offer you. A blessed one.

With the promise. That in just a short. Time from now. We. And all those. Who have gone before us. Will be together. Never to separate again. With our Lord.

And Savior. In glory. Is the Christian life. Worth it? I'll let. Martyr Jim Elliot. Missionary to Ecuador. Answer that. With his famous answer.

[ 44 : 21 ] He is no fool. Who gives. What he cannot keep. To gain that. Which he cannot lose. There's no dilemma. Here at all. In fact.

There's no comparison. Live for Christ. Follow him. Fully. Let's pray. Our faithful God.

And father. What would we do. Without the hope. That we have. Lord. We're so thankful. For the finished work.

Of Jesus Christ. On our behalf. Help us. To cling to him. Help us. To live. For him. Strengthen us. As we go through.

This fallen world. Lord. Be glorified. Through our lives. Use as we pray. And Lord. Forgive us. When we sin. Help us.

[ 45 : 18 ] To be more like. Your son. We pray. And we cry out. Heavenly father. For those. Who do not know you. For those. Who are not sure. Lord. May there be.

Rejoicing in heaven. Amongst the angels. Today. Over a sinner saved. Would you be glorified. Through that. We pray. In Jesus precious. And worthy name. Amen.