

5 lessons in discipleship

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 15 January 2017

Preacher: Reverend David MacLeod

[0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. A special welcome to those who are visiting with us.

There's not any visiting faces that I don't recognise but there's some who come and go and it's good to see you coming in here today. Tea, coffee at the end of the service and please stay behind for that if you're able to.

And this evening the service will be at 6 and it will be conducted by the Reverend Ivor Martin. Probably most of you know Ivor Martin. He was the minister for years in Kenneth Street Free Church in Stornoway.

And he's the principal of the Theological Seminary in Edinburgh. So Ivor will be taking the service, preaching and saying a wee bit about the work of the seminary.

Paul Murray, who's one of the students, who's married to Amanda, who was a teacher then, Sadi Scott, will also be present. And I think he'll probably take part in the service in some way and I know that he's going to speak to the Youth Fellowship.

[1 : 08] Both himself and Amanda hopefully are going to speak to the Youth Fellowship after the service. From Monday to Friday of this week I will be away in Edinburgh at in-service training that we have to go on every three years.

And so if there's any pastoral issues in the course of the week then Roddy Morrison has kindly agreed to provide cover. So if you speak to one of the elders in the first instance they can pass you on to Roddy if needs be.

In the course of the week as usual the ladies Bible study on Monday, First Fruit Fellowship on Tuesday, Road to Recovery on Tuesday. Also at 8 and the prayer meeting at half past 7 here in the community centre.

And in my absence the prayer meeting will be led by one of the reps from the Gideons. And you know the work of the Gideons. When you go in hotels you see Bibles, doctor surgeries, that kind of places you see Bibles that are left by the Gideons.

They usually give Bibles out to schools although that's becoming more and more difficult to do so. So they asked if they could come to Harris and speak to the congregation.

[2 : 16] I know they have an interest in maybe seeking to get one or two people from Harris who could become involved in the work of the Gideons. So that's this Wednesday at half past 7 and I would encourage as many as possible to come to that.

On Thursday at half past 7 women for mission meet at Scalpy Hall and details of what they'll be doing there will be on the screen and on the sheets and you can read that yourselves.

Services next Sunday will be conducted in the morning at 11 by Farrakhar MacLeod. I was saying to him this morning, the way I feel this morning is the way you feel next morning.

So prayers for Farrakhar, I'd appreciate it as I pray that you pray for me each week also. And in the evening, Reverend Andrew Coggle will take the service and I'll be preaching out in Scalpy.

A couple of dates for the diary. One is the beginning of Discipleship Explored and that is the 2nd of February. And that's the course that really helps us to think in a bit more depth about what it looks like to be a disciple, what it means to be a disciple, to follow Christ.

[3 : 28] And that's the 2nd of February on Thursday evenings through 4th. I think it's about seven weeks. And finally, there will be a Congregational Fellowship meal on Saturday, the 4th of February.

And so that's a date for your diary. Please put that down. There's no bolt-ons at the end of that. There will be no Congregational meeting or particular reason to meet and have a meal.

We'll have a meal, we'll enjoy fellowship and that's it. So if you could mark that in your diary, that would be appreciated. Let's begin and let us worship God and sing to his praise from Psalm 100. Psalm 100. The words are on the screen and also in the red hymn book at the beginning. Psalm 100. All people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice. And serve with mirth as praise forth tell. Come ye before him and rejoice.

[4 : 30] We stand to sing to God's praise. O people that on earth do dwell, sing to the Lord with cheerful voice.

Him set with mirth as praise forth tell. Come ye before him and rejoice.

Know that the Lord is God in need. Be me and acj tower in slund, sing to the Lord with Either and Moving naturally.

Meg with nagon on earth will you and You shall kiss the Lord withtinternet.

For His sheep he doth take. More enter than His gates with praise.

[6 : 04] Approach with joy His poor Son too. Praise Lord and bless His King always.

For it is simply so to do. For why the Lord of God is good.

His mercy is forever true. His truth that all times pervades good.

And shall from age to age endure. You should perhaps have mentioned that this evening the congregations from Leverborough and Scalpy will also be joining with us.

So if you could be encouraged to come out that would be appreciated. And one more thing is various people have asked me over the last few weeks when the communion season is.

[7 : 35] And I know the dates have been flitting around. The date for the communion season is the first Sunday in March and it's the first Sunday in September.

So just for your diaries the first Sunday in March and the first Sunday in September. So the March one is coming quite close and let's remember that and be prayerful.

Let's pray. Our Heavenly Father we thank you for this morning. We thank you for the privilege that we have to be able to stand in this place and sing praise to you as our God and our Saviour.

And our King and our Friend. We thank you that we are able to sing the words of that psalm and remember and have revealed to us the wonder of who you are.

And even as we remember what we've sung we thank you that you are the God who made us. That you are our maker. And you are the God who cares for us.

[8 : 42] Like the shepherd cares for his flock we see. That you are the God who cares for us. And you are the one who is merciful.

And Lord as we think about the fact that you are merciful we acknowledge that we are those who are sinners. We even in these past few days since last we met we are conscious of how we miss the mark of the standard that you have set.

And Lord we have sinned in our thoughts and in our words and in our deed. And Lord we acknowledge that we confess that. And we pray giving you thanks that you are the God who is merciful.

We pray that you would shield us from the penalty that our sin deserves. Your word tells us that the wages of sin is death.

And yet Lord we thank you that we meet here this day. Thankful for the fact that we remember that our Saviour died and he rose again. And we see that he died for us.

[9 : 49] He died to take the penalty of our sin upon himself. But we thank you that he rose. And on the first day of the week the day that we meet here just now.

We remember that our Saviour rose. Death could not hold him. We thank you that he paid the price for our sin. And as we look to him and as we trust in him.

We thank you that we come under the shield of the mercy that he has bought with his blood. And so we pray that you would look upon us this morning in mercy.

That you would not treat us as our sins deserve. Because Lord we thank you that you have treated our Saviour as our sins deserved. And so we pray that we would be those who are trusting in Jesus. Those who are calling out upon the name of Jesus. Those who know the blessing and the encouragement and the wonder of what it is to be. Shielded from our sin.

[10 : 52] And gifted with the grace of Christ. And so we pray Lord that you would enable us to see and to understand the truth that is revealed to us in the gospel.

That Jesus came and he lived and he died and he rose. On that mission that would take us from death to life. So we thank you Lord.

For all that you have done for us. And as we stand united in this place. We are able to sing joyfully. With gladness. We are able to sing praise. As we meditate upon all that you have done for us. And continue to do for us in Christ.

So help us to fix our eyes upon him. We pray for any of this morning. You have not yet looked to Christ. We ask Lord that you would be striving with them.

[11:57] That you would speak to them. That you would open their hearts. And we ask that even this day there may be someone. Who looks for the first time in faith to Jesus.

We pray for those who don't know. There are some in this community that know very little about what Jesus has done. And who he is. We ask that you would help us to reach them.

To be salt and light. To be ambassadors for Christ. To be those who are not ashamed to speak of the cross and the gospel. And Lord we pray for those who do know.

But have determined in their hearts that they will reject Jesus. And we ask that you would strive with them where they are. We are not those who come of our own accord to you.

But you are the God who draws us. And so we pray that you would awaken the hearts and souls of some. And that you would draw them to Jesus. And that they would in your time come to believe.

[13:05] And to be saved. So we pray for every effort that is made. In every church where Christ crucified is preached. That you would bless.

And Lord that you would use these means that you have given us. To spread the gospel. We pray for a road to recovery. We pray for a first fruit fellowship. We pray for the women for a mission meeting.

We pray for the prayer meeting Wednesday by Wednesday. We pray for the work of the Gideons who will come this evening. Or this coming Wednesday evening.

And we ask Lord that you would bless them in the work. And that you would help us to pray for that work as we hear of it. We pray for the work of the seminaries. Young men and women are trained for ministries of different kinds.

And we ask Lord that you would lead and that you would guide. And pray for the students especially at this time of year. As they try to discern where you are leading them. And we pray for the congregations that you have determined that they will minister in.

[14:13] Make your will clear to them we pray. And lead and guide and bless those that you have called to serve you. And we ask now that you would be with us.

That you would continue to lead us and guide us in worship this morning. We pray for those who are not here. We continue to pray for those who are ill. And ask that you would minister to them where they are in their homes.

We pray for those who are grieving. And whose hearts are sore. In all the aftermath of the grief of the last couple of weeks. We ask that you would be to them the God of all comfort.

And Lord we pray for those who would desire to be here. But to have been housebound for some time.

And we ask Lord that you would minister to them. And that you would increase their strength. And that soon we would see them here. Worshipping in this place with us. Hear our prayers.

[15:14] Continue with us. Take away our sin. And lead us by the Holy Spirit. And we pray these things in Jesus name. Amen. Has anybody ever seen this game before?

Yes. Do you know how to play it? Yes. Yes. Yes. We have one boy versus one girl.

Me. Me. Me. Me. Me. Me. Me. Me. Me. Emma. Oh. And.

No. Not you John Roddy, no? No. No chance. Go at that. Okay Emma. And we'll have John O.

And Alistair can take turns. Okay Emma. How does the game work? Do you know? Can you tell us Emma? No. Okay. Okay.

[16:17] Okay. What is this first of all? Can you all see that? A crocodile. That's a crocodile. What do crocodiles like to do? Snap. They like to snap you.

And so in this game. There's these teeth that are up there. And you've got to put your finger on a tooth. And one of these teeth. Will cause the crocodile's mouth to.

Snap. Ladies first. You've got to wait with it.

Right then. Alistair. You ready? Oh. All right. There you go.

Emma. No, no. It's boys and girls. You two are a team. Right. John O. Ah! Ah! Are you okay?

[17:28] John O. Do we need to send you to a doctor? Anthony. Do you need to come and check his fingers off? I think we're okay. I think we're okay. It's a fun game that, isn't it?

And. That's a game. As I was playing that game over Christmas time. It made me think about. About sin. Because there's a song that the girls sometimes play in the car.

By a man called Colin Buchanan. And it says in the song. Sin is like a great big crocodile. Sin is a dangerous trap.

Sin can creep up like a crocodile. All of a sudden. Snap. Snap. I've watched that. I've watched the DVD. You've watched the DVD of the song.

You've heard it in the car too, I'm sure. So. So. If sin is like a great big crocodile. We know that it is. And if sin is something that's dangerous.

[18 : 25] And we can find something that just snaps. On us. What should we do? Do you think we should live our lives. Thinking. Hmm.

Maybe I'll just get away with. A wee bit more of sin. And we do for one time. Two times. and you think that would be a wise way to live our lives playing with sin. Playing with sin is a bit like putting your hand in a crocodile's mouth and hoping that the crocodile will stay sleeping and it won't snap us.

So do you think we should live close to sin or do you think we should try and get away as far as we can? We should live our lives seeing the danger of sin and staying as far away from the danger of sin as possible and coming closer and closer and closer to whom?

Jesus. Do you know why Jesus came to this world? He came to this world, Caitlin? He came to this world to take away our sins and as I was thinking about the cross when I was preparing this wee message the cross was the place where Jesus took the sin of our sin upon himself and if we trust him and if we ask him to be our friend and our saviour then he saves us from sin and he keeps us safe forever.

So let's pray that you will be our friend and that you will be our saviour. Lord God we thank you that you tell us the truth about this world and you tell us the truth about ourselves and we know that we are people who get very easily drawn into doing things which are sinful and yet we know that that is not the right way to live and so we pray that you would help us to get far away from the sins that we find sometimes snap on us.

[21 : 01] We thank you that on the cross Jesus died to take the snap of sin away from us and we pray that we would be those who are trusting in him and that he would be our friend and that Jesus would be the one that we could call our saviour.

So hear our prayers and help us to believe and we ask this in Jesus name. Amen. We're going to sing now boys and girls Mission Praise 746 and the words are on the screen.

746 in Mission Praise What a friend we have in Jesus All our sins and griefs to bear What the privilege to carry everything to God in faith.

We'll stand to sing. If you could turn in your Bibles please to John chapter 2 John chapter 2 and we read from verse 1 of the chapter.

John chapter 2 and reading at verse 1 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

[22 : 16] When the wine was gone Jesus' mother said to him They have no more wine. Dear woman why do you involve me? Jesus replied My time has not yet come.

His mother said to the servants Do whatever he tells you. Nearby stood six stone water jars the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing.

each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants Fill the jars with water so they filled them to the brim. Then he told them Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.

They did so and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realise where it had come from though the servants who had drawn the water knew.

Then he called the bridegroom aside and said Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink but you have saved the best till now.

[23 : 16] This is the first of his miraculous signs Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory and his disciples put their faith in him.

After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples there they stayed for a few days. Amen. And may God bless that reading of his word to us.

Callum's now going to lead us in prayer in Galilee. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[25 : 15] Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[26 : 55] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thats Thank you. Thank you.

I see orphans outcomes and. Therefore, I to ask ■range my childrenask rich Amen.

Amen. From the West so far hath He from us removed in His love all our iniquity.

These two stanzas to God's praise and Gaelic will remain seated to sing. Amen.

[29 : 41] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. If you could turn back to John chapter 2 please in your Bibles and this is the point in John's gospel where we really see the beginning of Jesus' public ministry.

This is the launch point, you could say. And it always staggers me when I come to this chapter in the beginning. This is the circumstances through which, and this was the place through which Jesus would launch this ministry.

[33 : 25] We tend to think of occasions where it's launched, it's launched with huge drama and VIPs in the centre, the capital city.

Think about the Olympics and the splendour, the glamour of the opening ceremony in London.

Where does Jesus launch his ministry? We're in a little remote place in Cana, in Galilee.

not in some HQ, not in some high profile capital city, but in a place that was hidden from the vast majority of the world where just a few people were there and Jesus is surrounded, not by VIPs, but by a few ordinary people that he's called to himself in the situation of a family wedding.

Let's pray as we come to the passage. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you for the word, the Bible, the truth, where you reveal yourself and your purposes and your plans to us.

And we thank you that just as we read in this passage of a remote place with a few people and Jesus was there, we thank you that in this remote place with just a few people, we have the assurance that Jesus is here.

[34 : 53] And we ask, Lord Jesus, that you would be at work in the power of the Spirit in our hearts, causing those of us who are believers to believe more firmly and to have faith that's increased.

And we pray that those who do not yet believe, as we consider the wonder of who Jesus is and what he did, we pray that you would draw someone into faith for the first time today.

Hear our prayers. Help us and guide us by the Spirit. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. I've got a friend in Inverness.

I haven't seen him for quite a few years, so I use the term friend loosely, but he's a driving instructor. And so you know what a driving instructor does, they spend some weeks, maybe months, trying to teach people how to get ready for their driving test.

And that's what he does. And he'll do all he can for a number of weeks in advance of the test to try and prepare them and get them ready for the date where the test is set.

[36 : 11] And if they get through the test on that day, if they pass, he will obviously congratulate them, he'll shake their hand, he'll congratulate them on passing the test, but he'll always make very clear that it's only now that they actually start to learn how to drive.

And in John chapter 2, we are brought to meet again with these few disciples that Jesus has called to himself.

In John chapter 1, we saw how Jesus came alongside these disciples and he called them and he called them to follow him and they heard and they began to follow.

So, we see that they were disciples of Jesus. But, if I could put it this way, they were disciples of Jesus who very much still had their own place on.

They were learning to be disciples. They were learning what it looked like and what it was like to follow Christ. And the truth is, we're always learning.

[37 : 30] And we may have been on the road for decades now, following Christ, having put our faith in him at some time in the past, but every day that we are in this world, we are still learning what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

He's the one who calls us to trust him when we trust, when we believe, we are justified, our sins are removed from us as far as the east is from the west. And then the work of sanctification begins, where we follow.

And day by day, year by year, hopefully, prayerfully, we follow more closely. So in this chapter, in these verses that we read, there are five lessons that Jesus teaches his disciples as to how they can follow.

and if we're here today and we are disciples of Jesus, just as they applied these lessons to the disciples back there and then, these are lessons that apply squarely to us in the here and now. So the first lesson that we learn in this chapter is that we are to be in the world, but not of the world. The second lesson that we learn as disciples looking at these verses is that we're to pray.

[38 : 50] The third lesson of discipleship that we see here is that we are not just to pray, but we're to obey. The fourth lesson is the disciples see here and we see with them that we are to follow the signs that Jesus sets out for us.

And the final lesson is a lesson whereby we are called to trust him. So lesson number one, that's the points for the sermon. And the first point that we come to is that we are to be in the world as disciples, but not of the world.

And that would be Jesus' prayer for his disciples as he came towards the end of his ministry here in this world. We're made privy to that in John chapter 17.

As he prays for the disciples, he prays in verse 15, he says, my prayer is not that you take them out of the world, but that you protect them from the evil one.

And what Jesus prayed for them in John 17, Jesus practices with them in John chapter 2. He sets an example for them to follow.

[40 : 05] So let's look at the verses. Verse 1, on the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there. And Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.

So we have this scenario that's painted for us of this wedding that's happening in a place perhaps not unlike this. And there is the gathering of the wedding.

The wedding happened over the course of a few days, not the same as the year. And in the middle of all that, we see Jesus' mother, and we see Jesus and we see the disciples.

Now the fact is, it's true that at times Jesus withdrew from the world. There were times when Jesus taught his disciples to withdraw and to be still and to come to know more and more that he is God and to learn from him.

Perhaps that's what was happening in verse 12 when Jesus went to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. He stayed there for a few days. Maybe that was a time where they were still.

[41 : 19] And he taught them as they withdrew from the crowds that John chapter 2 verse 1 was not one time a withdrawal. This was a time where we see Jesus and his disciples as those who were invited and who were there at the wedding rejoicing with those who rejoice.

They were in the world although they weren't of the world. And the simple point for us which we must not miss is that we if we are disciples of Christ are to be in the world but not of the world. And in the course of our lives invitations will come to dinners and weddings and functions of one kind and another events and gatherings and so on and the example that Jesus sets to us in John chapter 2 is an example whereby disciples of Christ will be there.

They won't be hidden away withdrawn separate from the crowds but they'll be there where the people are in the world and being the salt and the light that we are called to be in in Matthew chapter 5.

The example that's set is that disciples will be there as the disciples were there and we can imagine the disciples starting up conversations the kind of conversations that Paul encourages us to start up in this world conversations Colossians 4 verse 6 that are full of grace and are seasoned with the salt of the gospel.

[43 : 14] There's a point just to consider as we pause. How alert are we to opportunities to start conversations in the world with people that will be seasoned with the salt of the gospel?

How engaged are we in conversations that are full of grace? Grace being God's riches at Christ's expense.

the one thing in a small community is we love to talk and we all know lots about everyone.

There are opportunities in a place like this that there aren't in a city like London where we can engage in conversation and we're to bring Jesus in to these conversations.

we're to be in the world but not of the world. I remember a friend of mine and he became a Christian I think he was in his early twenties and he was a decent football player fiery but pretty good and he was very quickly told by the Kirk session after he became a Christian that he was to separate himself from that whole sphere.

[44 : 42] Get off the football field they said. Your football days are done. Hang up your boots. Be ye separate. And that's one example of many that can be given where people have been told similar things.

But the simple point I want to make is that that is not the example that Jesus said. And that's not the prayer that Jesus prayed. And I know as one who's placid in a normal context but sees the red mist come down and feels it come down on a football pitch or a squash court I know how difficult it can be to be a good witness in these places.

And it can be a difficult thing to be a good witness in the middle of a community weather. You know what it can be an equally difficult thing to be a good witness at a flank.

I've never heard of a court session who told a crofter to get separate from the flank. What do we do in these situations where we're in the world and it's difficult?

Of course we're to be discerned. Of course there are occasions we have to step back from because we know we just shouldn't be there. But what do we do when we find ourselves in a situation and it is difficult and there are tensions and we feel the vulnerability of being a disciple in the world?

[46 : 08] What do we do? We pray for grace. We pray for strength. We pray that Jesus will help us and Jesus who was not of this world but who is living in us will be seen in us and through us.

So are we in the world Christians? We're in church. It's good that we are. are we in the world? The Great Commission is a commission where we are commanded to go out, not where we are expected to be those who will sit and wait for the world to come in.

So that's the first point, the first lesson in discipleship, to be in the world but not of the world. The second lesson from this chapter is a lesson where we are taught to pray.

Verse 3, when the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, they have no more wine. So stop.

And I've said this before but I'll say it again.

I think this is one of the most profound lessons on prayer that disciples can learn. What happened?

Well, in the wedding, they ran out of wine.

[47 : 35] And that was a huge embarrassment. That was an absolute humiliation for a family to be in a situation like that where they who were expected to provide for those who gathered hadn't provided.

And days before, perhaps the end of the wedding, there was no more wine left. And this becomes something that Mary realizes.

she becomes aware of the problem and Mary believes that Jesus can help. And so she simply and very briefly takes the problem and she brings it to the attention of Christ.

When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, they have no more wine. Now that's prayer.

That's prayer.

they have no more wine. Five words, well that's a prayer. I remember a gentleman that would come to the prayer meeting in a place that used to be, not here.

[48 : 48] And during the prayer time, my observation always was that he wouldn't take his problems to the Lord in prayer, but he would take all his carefully engineered solutions to the Lord in prayer.

And essentially his prayers were a list of things that he was telling the Lord to do, as if the Lord didn't already know what the best thing to do was.

And it used to make me cringe. I used to make my toes curl when I was sitting there with my head bowed, because that's not prayer. Prayer is to take our problems to Jesus, to take our burdens to Jesus, because we believe that he can help, and we believe that he cares for us enough to get involved in help.

1 Peter 5:7 says, cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. And that's what disciples of Christ are taught to do, and called to do.

Take our anxieties, take our problems, take our worries, take our burdens, and cast them on him, through prayer.

[50:17] And not just for ourselves, but as we look around us, in our families, amongst our friends, in the community, and we see people who have problems, we take these problems and we present them to the Lord.

We tell the Lord about someone who's lost their job. He has lost his job. This one has lost their brother, their sister. This one is confused and they don't know which way to go.

This one is struggling with alcohol and they just can't beat it. Huge problems that we may have in our lives and we may see in the lives of others. What do disciples do?

They take the problems and they bring them to the Lord in prayer. And our biggest problem, the problem for us that is insuperable, that we cannot fix in any way, is our sin.

So what do we do with it? We take it to the one who is able to bear the weight and the shame of it. We're going to sing at the end, bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place, condemned, he stood.

[51:39] So what do we do with our sin? We take it to the man of songs. We take it to the one who was able, as the psalmist pointed forward to, take our iniquities and remove them as far as the east is from the west.

We take it to Jesus, our friend, the one who listens to everything we carry to him.

We do it by prayer. How do we pray? Because I hear this all the time. I don't know how to pray.

Well, Mary's given us one example, five words long.

Here's another example of how we become Christians essentially. How does the sinner who has become aware of the burden of their sin come to Jesus by prayer and ask that that sin would be removed and that Christ would come in?

Well, Jesus gives us one illustration of a prayer that is recorded for us that comes with it the assurance of justification. Find it in Luke chapter 18 and verse 13.

[52:59] And it's seven words long. God have mercy on me, a sinner. Have you prayed that prayer yet?

That's the prayer that takes us off the road to destruction. And it takes us on to the road of discipleship.

Are you there yet? disciples, those who know that we are there, are we praying?

Are we praying in the private place? Are we praying in the public place? Are we gathering to pray and making it a priority?

Because that's what disciples will do. Are we going to do? William Cowper, quoted it before, says, Satan trembles when he sees the weakest saint on their knees.

[54:16] And so we may consider ourselves to be the weakest of saints, the poorest of disciples. What should we do? We should pray. Not buy a book about prayer. Not go on a course about prayer.

Get on our knees. And pray. Gather on Wednesday and pray. There's some things you can't learn on a desktop.

You can't learn how to swim until you get in the pool. You can't learn how to drive until you get in the driving seat. And we can't learn how to pray until we get in our knees.

So disciples are taught to be in the world but not of the world. Disciples are taught secondly to pray. Disciples are taught thirdly here.

The third lesson is to obey. Look at verse 5. Jesus' mother said to the servants do whatever he tells you.

[55:20] Nearby stood six stone water jars the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing. Each holding from twenty to thirty gallons. Jesus said to the servants fill the jars with water.

So they filled them to the brim. Then he told them now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet. They did so.

It's interesting just to think about the servants having received their instructions from Mary as those who were going to be delivering the product to the master of ceremonies.

Can you imagine the situation as Jesus comes close to them and says fill them up with water.

There's no more wine. And they're all in the kitchen stressing you can imagine about the poor reality

that there's going to be when everybody discovers that there's no more wine.

So Mary says hang on a minute she gets Jesus Jesus comes in he says fill the jars up to the brim of water. Now go and serve her. Imagine how they felt as they wandered through with these jugs full of water and then the wonder that they must have felt as they saw the emcee taking hold of the cup tasting what was in it and being amazed at the quality of the wine.

[57 : 07] But what we see here in Mary and in the servants is that there was a willingness to obey. Mary prayed and then she obeyed what Jesus told her to do.

Bruce Millen the commentator says Mary's request was followed by implicit obedience. Prayer without a willingness to obey is little better than faith without willingness to work.

then think about the disciples. In the middle of all this what were they learning? Well they were learning that to obey Jesus was always the best thing to do.

And all this was for their benefit. This was a lesson. This was a miraculous sign which we'll come to in a second. It was for their benefits. Did Jesus need the jars?

Did he need the water? Did he need the engagement of the sermons? No he didn't. Because we know that our God John chapter 1 is a God who is able to create and make anything from nothing.

[58 : 23] But in this case Jesus used the jars and he used the water and he used the people and he was teaching them that there is great blessing and there is great wisdom in giving Christ our obedience.

And what was a lesson for them is a lesson for us. A disciple is called to holy living. A disciple is called to a life of obedience to Jesus and his word.

That's not what saves us. We are saved by grace. We are saved by what Jesus has done. He is the one who was obedient to the will of the father and he went all the way to the cross to pay for our sins so that we could be saved.

But once we are saved when we are disciples we are called to obedience and what we see here and what we come to know in our experience as disciples as Christians is that there is great wisdom and there is great delight in giving our obedience to Christ.

To obey is always the best thing for the disciple. To obey is the thing that brings glory to the name of Jesus to those who are looking on as we see here.

[59 : 51] and to obey is the means by which we show our love to Jesus and we show our love for Jesus.

John chapter 14 Jesus said if you love me you will obey what I command. Whoever has my commands and obeys them he is the one who loves me.

He who loves me will be loved by my father and I too will love him and show myself to him. Perhaps today we are conscious of a lack of progress in our lives as Christians.

Maybe today we think about the fact that we perhaps know Christ know better today than we did ten years ago. Maybe this is the answer.

He who loves me is him who will obey. And when we obey we have the promise that God himself will show himself to us.

[61 : 13] we want to know Jesus better. If we want to know the father better. If we want to know the reality of the spirit of God at work in our lives and through us we need to obey.

The fourth sign, the fourth lesson that Jesus teaches in this chapter is that disciples are those who are to follow the signs that he sets out for us.

And we pick up here at verse 9. The servants are obedient, they take the water through as they're called to, and they deliver it to the master of the banquet.

He tasted the wine, the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside and said, everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink.

But you have saved the best till now. And then we're given the commentary of why all this was happening. This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed in Cana, little Cana of Galilee.

[62 : 34] So this was a sign. This was not the reason that Jesus left heaven to come to earth. He didn't leave glory to come to this world to ensure that there would be enough wine at one particular wedding and enough bread and fish at another occasion where 5,000 men were to gather.

Jesus makes that point clear in his conversation with Mary in verse 4. He tells her, my time has not yet come. But nevertheless, as Mary brings the problem to Christ, Jesus responds.

He intervenes. And the miracle that he performs was a miracle that didn't just save the blushes of the family, of the wedding guests on that day.

It was also a sign. And it was a sign that pointed the disciples to Jesus. And as they looked to him, increasingly what they were seeing was that Jesus was no ordinary man, but he was the God-man. He was the Messiah. He was the Son of God. He was the Savior. The sign pointed to Jesus. Are we looking to Jesus?

[64 : 00] Are we looking to God-man? And have you come to see yet that he is no ordinary man, but he is the God-man, that he is the Son of God, that he is the Messiah, that he is the Savior, your Savior?

See, that's John's intention in writing this gospel. He didn't write this for our entertainment. He didn't write this for our academic stimulation. salvation. He wrote this so that we will believe.

God inspired him. The purpose of the book is outlined in John 20 at the end. Jesus, verse 30 and 31, John says, Jesus did many other miraculous signs over and above those that are recorded in here.

Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book, but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

So the sign pointed to the person of Christ, and the sign also pointed very briefly to the work that Jesus came to do.

[65 : 25] We're given a wee bit of detail in verse 6 that we're to take note of. Jesus draws our attention in verse 6 to the jars that were used for a particular purpose.

They were used for the purpose of ceremonial washing. And so day by day, these jars, they were filled with water and they were emptied in an attempt to purify and to cleanse.

But the reality was that the water in itself that was in these jars, the water of the religious ritual that had marked the years prior, it would never cleanse the heart.

It was the wine. which pointed to the blood that would be shed on the cross that would provide heart cleansing.

And so the disciples then and now are being pointed in a slightly obscure way the beginnings of the pointing to the cross, that place where our burdens would be lifted and our sins would be rolled away forever.

[66 : 37] through the blood that we remember as we take the cup that is filled with the wine. So Jesus teaches the disciples to follow the signs that pointed to himself and his mission, his work.

And finally, the final lesson that is given to the disciples then and now, it's a lesson to trust. And the effect of all of this, we're told, is that the disciples trusted.

Verse 11, this, the first of his miraculous signs Jesus performed in Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory and his disciples put their faith in him.

And just to finish and to summarize everything, that's what disciples of Jesus do. They put their faith in him.

and not in anyone else and not in themselves, but in him. So are you a disciple?

[67 : 58] Are you trusting Jesus? You know, we can follow the signs and we can see who Jesus is. We can recognize that he's not just a man, he's a God-man, Son of God.

we can even understand why he came and have some understanding of the cross, what he was doing there. We can be those who are blessed by the gifts that he bestows upon us, as he did at the wedding in Cana of Galilee to those guests who were present.

We can enjoy his company. We can invite him into the high days of our lives, like the wedding in Cana of Galilee, where he was invited and he was there.

And we can even in some measure obey him in the superstitious hope that he will look upon our obedience and reward us for that obedience. But all of that is not enough. We need to trust him.

So are you trusting him? Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this passage and we thank you for the teaching that is given to us.

[69 : 28] We thank you for the call that is going out to us to trust in Jesus, the one who would shed his blood so that we could be forgiven.

We ask, Lord, that you would strive with us and that you would move in the hearts of those who are seeing Jesus and understanding why he came and yet still holding back.

We pray that today, before we walk out the door, each one of us would be able to say that we trust in him.

And Lord, we ask that as those who trust in Christ, we would be those who are in the world, not withdrawn, not hiding from the world, but we pray that we would be in the world and that Christ would be seen in and through us.

We pray that we would be those who take our problems and the problems of those whom we see around us and those that we love, that we would present them day by day to Jesus, the one who is able to help.

[70 : 43] We pray that you would help us to obey you, Lord. We confess that often we fail in that and as we fail in that we are dry in our own hearts, in our own spirit.

Forgive us, Lord, and help us to obey you so that we would come to know you better. And that your glory would be seen in and through our lives.

And all these things we pray. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We sing to finish 458 in Mission Praise.

458 and the words are on the screen also. Man of sorrows, what the name for the Son of God who came, ruined sinners to reclaim, hallelujah, what a Savior.

We'll stand to sing. And now we pray that the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God the Father and the fellowship of God the Holy Spirit would be with us all.

[71 : 52] We'll know it forevermore. Amen. Thank you.